

The Nation and The Athenæum

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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE principal event of the week for Liberals, and indeed for all who are interested in domestic politics, has been the publication of Lord Oxford's letter to Mr. Lloyd George and the latter's reply. Who would have believed that in a controversy between these two statesmen Mr. Lloyd George would be triumphantly and unmistakably in the right? Yet so it is. Lord Oxford, for the first time in his long and honourable career, has shown himself to be entirely out of touch with Liberal opinion; he is even, it seems, out of touch with public events, for he is under the illusion that our industrial troubles are over and that "the life of the country has resumed its normal course." Mr. Lloyd George knows better. He is aware that a disastrous deadlock still exists in the Coal Industry; and in his admirable speech at Llandudno on Wednesday he gave his support to the only practicable proposal which has been made for bringing that deadlock to an end. There is a touch of irony in the fact that it was Lord Oxford who first pointed the way to this solution and that it was, therefore, to his authority that Mr. Lloyd George was able to appeal.

"As Lord Oxford pointed out," he said, "in that part of his speech in the House of Lords which was suppressed by Mr. Churchill, the Liberal Government in 1912 legislated during the strike over the heads of miners and mine-owners alike, and that settled the dispute. Why should not the Government follow that successful precedent? By doing so you will shorten the conflict, and at worst make a better use of it than looking on impotently whilst our trade is suffering. I believe that if mine-owners and if miners alike saw that the Government at last meant business they would settle quickly."

The practical application of the 1912 precedent was worked out in a letter signed by several leading Liberals which appeared in Wednesday's TIMES. We discuss the matter on another page.

The MANCHESTER GUARDIAN gave prominence on Thursday to a rumour that Lord Oxford is about to resign his leadership of the Liberal Party and that Lord Grey is to succeed him. The suggestion is that Lord Oxford's letter to Mr. Lloyd George was written and hurriedly published with a view to facilitating this

change; and the fact that Lord Grey is addressing a hastily arranged meeting at the National Liberal Club on Friday is adduced as evidence in support of the rumour. The whole story is incredible. Lord Oxford and Lord Grey have never lent themselves to intrigue, and are not likely to do so at this stage in their careers. The intrigue suggested would, moreover, be an extremely silly one. Could there be a worse preparation for a change of leadership than an open breach in the party on an issue which cuts right across all previous divisions of opinion? Is Lord Oxford the man to close his political career by picking a quarrel? Some explanation of Lord Oxford's blunder is no doubt required, but it must at least be plausible to be believed.

Bit by bit, through an angry revelation here, an indiscretion there, and the filling in of gaps by deduction, the story of the General Strike is coming to light. It is now possible to see pretty clearly how the Strike began and how it ended, though some details still remain obscure. At the eleventh hour the miners had no representative on the General Council of the T.U.C. Mr. Richards was ill, and Mr. Smillie saw fit to withdraw to Scotland during the crisis. But the General Council was not given a free hand by the Miners' Federation to negotiate terms with the Government. Every offer, every formula, had to be taken to the miners for their consent. The T.U.C. had the power to make war; they had not the power to make peace. Nevertheless, they worked hard for a settlement:—

"I have had experience," said Mr. Cook in his bitter speech last Sunday, "of being bullied in colliery offices; I had experience in 1920 and 1921 in meeting various Prime Ministers, but never have we been bullied by the employers or the Government to the extent that we were bullied by certain trade union leaders to accept a reduction in wages."

Lord Birkenhead's famous formula, that the Commission's Report should be studied "with the knowledge that it may involve some reduction of wages" was pressed upon the miners by the T.U.C.; it is even said that Mr. Herbert Smith accepted it; his executive turned it down.

It is widely believed in Labour circles that when the miners rejected the Birkenhead formula the T.U.C. (or some, at least, of the prominent Union leaders) were prepared to break with them and abandon the threat of a general strike. Mr. Brailsford, for instance, writes in last week's *NEW LEADER* that:—

"My own impression, from what I heard that evening, was that another rupture and another 'Black Friday' were imminent. But if the Council thought of abandoning the miners, the Government on this occasion saved it from itself by locking the door against it and breaking off negotiations. . . ."

It is clear, at any rate, that when the T.U.C. returned to the Cabinet expecting to resume conversations, they found the situation entirely changed. During their absence, Mr. Baldwin, Lord Birkenhead, and Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, with whom they had been negotiating apart, had returned to their colleagues and been faced by a revolt. Seven Ministers, it seems, of whom the most important were Mr. Churchill and Mr. Chamberlain, had threatened to resign, and Mr. Baldwin had saved his Government by giving way. The "frontier incident" which had turned the scales against the pacifists in the Cabinet was, of course, the censoring of the *DAILY MAIL* leader, but this was by no means the isolated act of irresponsible persons which we at first supposed. It is now known that the word had been passed round the printers' unions to keep a sharp eye on editorial pronouncements, and several journals had been subjected to intolerable interference. Moreover, the telegrams ordering a general strike had been sent out that afternoon, and it was easy for overwrought Ministers to imagine that the war had begun while they were being held in talk.

The moral to be drawn from this story of war origins is, as we suggested immediately the Strike was called off, analogous to that which should be drawn in the case of international war. In our issue of May 15th, which was prevented by the aftermath of the Strike from reaching many of our readers, we pointed out that

"you cannot use any threat habitually as the basis of your bargaining position without, sooner or later, having to make it good. You may protest when the time comes that your intentions were pacific, that you laboured and pleaded for peace, that the other man was unreasonable or lost his head, and was mainly at fault. All that may be true, but it is almost irrelevant. Sooner or later, if these outrageous threats of war or general strikes are employed, someone will blunder, someone will lose his head, and the final breakdown is likely to come over some ludicrously trifling point. You ought to have allowed for that when you first employed the threat, and when no doubt it succeeded. The man who threatens war or threatens a general strike incurs then, when he first threatens it, the real moral responsibility of the final and almost inevitable catastrophe."

Everything that has since been revealed about the last hours before the Strike confirms the view that, as Mr. Brailsford says, the Council "hoped and even believed, up to the last minute, that the threat would bring a settlement," but they cannot escape responsibility on that ground.

The fact that the T.U.C. leaders detested the weapon which they used for bargaining purposes did not avert the Strike, but it was a main cause of its sudden end. It is, of course, ridiculous to charge them with cowardice—to call off the Strike when they did required at least as much courage as to continue it—but it is obvious that their hearts were not in the task upon which they had embarked. The Government's insistence on the Constitutional issue increased their uneasiness, and Sir John Simon's pronouncements upon the legal aspects of the case, though they have not

carried conviction to those who have given them closer examination, undoubtedly impressed the Union leaders. Finally, a rumour reached Ecclestone Square that all the leaders were to be arrested, that a Bill repealing the Trade Disputes Act was to be rushed through Parliament, and that the Unions' funds were to be seized. It is not necessary to inquire into the extent to which Sir Herbert Samuel was regarded by the T.U.C. as the Government's spokesman. Any excuse for calling off the Strike was welcome, and the Samuel memorandum served that turn. It is clear, indeed, that the miners could have had the substance of the memorandum if they had come to terms with the T.U.C., or in the twenty-four hours after the Strike was called off. But the miners, in Mr. Herbert Smith's emphatic phrase, would have "nowt of Samuel"; they had drawn too heavily upon the sympathy of the T.U.C., and they were left to continue their fight alone.

The agreement reached between the railway companies and unions to solve the reinstatement problem reflects credit on all concerned. The guaranteed week is to be temporarily suspended, and as many men as possible will be employed on half-time at half-pay. If at any station or depot the work available would not yield half-pay to all the men, the work will be distributed on the basis of three days minimum to a portion of the men each week under a weekly rotation. Those men who are entitled to unemployment insurance benefits will be excluded from participation in these arrangements, if, by sharing in the available work they would prejudice the non-insured employees. These arrangements are to continue in force until it is mutually agreed to restore the guaranteed week. The difficulties of reinstatement have been accentuated in the railway service by the fact that the railways have been considerably over-staffed for a long time, and the restriction of services necessitated by the coal stoppage has added a temporary problem of an even more serious character. The arrangement which has been made will distribute the hardship resulting from these circumstances as evenly as possible among the men, and will enable them to tide over the period for which they are ineligible for unemployment benefit owing to the General Strike.

At last the French Government has done what we have been urging them for many months to do. They have decided "to make use of the whole credit of the State" to support the franc exchange; and we presume that "the whole credit of the State" includes, as it certainly should, the vast gold reserves of the Bank of France. Not that the Bank will lose much gold in practice, provided they are ready, and known to be ready, to part with it freely; for the underlying factors in the problem are quite consistent with maintaining the franc at its present level, so that once the *expectation* of a continuous fall is removed, there is not likely to be any serious strain on the exchange. The franc went below 170 to the £ last week; it is now on the right side of 150. The authorities would be well advised, we think, to leave it and to keep it there. We do not say that it would be impossible to maintain an appreciably higher figure, and it is arguable that it would be better to aim at, say, 125. But though not impossible, this would be more difficult. The risk of ultimate failure would be greater; and French credit is not strong enough to bear another failure.

The French and Spaniards have at last succeeded in dealing a knock-out blow at the confederation of tribes which Abd-el-Krim has held together for so long. Their troops joined hands along the Nekar Wadi, bring-

ing the Alhucemas—Melilla area into continuous communication with the Wergha-Taza front. This gave them a military advantage which it would be hard to exaggerate. It brought at least six powerful tribes into the Franco-Spanish zone, and drove Abd-el-Krim's forces into the central masses of the Atlas, where it was impossible to remunition them. Abd-el-Krim himself has surrendered, and the military victory is complete. It would be rash, however, to assume that the difficulties of the French are over. The policy of the knock-out blow has its disadvantages. Their recent advance has carried the French over territory which they will never be able to occupy and patrol, far less to colonize. Sooner or later they and the Spaniards will have to settle down to determine where their frontiers end and the unoccupied Riff begins: they will then be at grips with the consequences of the policy they have pursued.

* * *

The Egyptian electorate has returned a very large Zaghlulist majority. The results, according to latest reports, are: Zaghlulists 144, Constitutional Liberals 29, Nationalists 6, Independents 18, Unionists 7. The surprising part of this result is that the coalition of Liberals, Nationalists, and Zaghlulists, formed shortly before the election, has not affected the issue. It was hoped, both by Ziwar and the moderate elements of the population, that this triple alliance would end in constituting a Zaghlulist majority, dependent, to a certain extent, upon the representatives of the commercial and land-owning classes. As far as can be judged, Zaghlul is free to offer portfolios to the Liberal and Constitutional parties on unacceptable conditions, declare the alliance at an end, and face Parliament with a purely "Wafd" Cabinet. Even if he does not do this at once, there can be little doubt that, three or four months hence, Egypt will be governed solely by Zaghlul and his nominees. For the past two years Zaghlul has repeatedly said that if he returns to power, he will simply continue his old policy with regard to the Sudan and every other contested point. This may result in years of friction and ill-feeling between Egypt and Great Britain, or it may end in another open break. The outstanding fact is that the British Government is now face to face with the consequences of its 1924 policy.

* * *

The new German Chancellor, Herr Marx, has presented the Reichstag with one of those toneless and uninteresting statements about German policy which have been characteristic of the Parliamentary debates of the German republican régime. The more striking utterances of German public life have been made outside Parliament. The Whitsun holiday was marked by immense military parades of the two extreme parties in the State. The Nationalist organizations concentrated vast numbers of their representatives in Düsseldorf and other large towns, and held demonstrations, which, for precision of movement and regard for display, would compare favourably with our trooping of the colours. The Communists made a counter-demonstration, which was carefully stage-managed to draw attention to the fact that the German Communist Party have studied, digested, and applied the company and battalion drill of the old Imperial army. By a singular piece of good fortune the biggest of the Nationalist demonstrations took place in Düsseldorf, and the Communist gathering was held in Berlin.

* * *

It is, of course, natural for us to laugh at these theatrical displays, with their accompaniment of songs,

brass bands, and paste-board rhetoric, but it is also easy to understand that the ordinary German citizen views them with the utmost alarm. Whilst he works, two extreme parties in the State arm if they can, and drill regularly. He cannot believe that parties with such aims as those professed by the Nationalist and Communist leaders will be content with what we should call regimental rivalry, and he knows well enough that he will lose heavily if the present state of things ends in widespread civil disturbances. The alarm felt by the ordinary German is the deeper in that the Imperial property question will shortly be before the country in a form calculated to rouse great passions. The German people are being asked to vote, not upon a plan of settlement, but upon the simple issue of confiscation or no confiscation. Both the extreme parties have been prodigal in their threats to terrorize the voters, and they have made use of the Whitsun holiday to show that they can fulfil their threats. Small wonder that the new Chancellor says as little as he can, and gives orders that the "Viking" organization shall be dissolved, and that its organizing head shall be kept under police supervision.

* * *

When the present Constitution of Poland was drawn up and voted, Pilsudski was Chief of the State. The majority in the Diet, openly or secretly hostile to him, to make certain of his not accepting the Presidency, made it a position fit to "fatten a pig." It thus succeeded in keeping him out, but the Presidency did not prove suitable for its original purpose. The first President of the Polish Republic was murdered within a few weeks of his election; the second was deposed; who wants now to be the third? "Neutral" candidates have been mentioned—*e.g.*, Paderewski or Count Skrzynski. But the foremost candidate is Pilsudski himself. His election would, indeed, be condign punishment for his *coup*. He would then have to justify it by results. So far one can hardly gauge the line he would take if saddled with supreme responsibility. The present Cabinet is a weak body; half its members seem to support themselves by their insignificance; with such assistants Pilsudski, having started out as a Herod, would change into the director of an orphanage. He cannot remain that permanently; and the future remains obscure. The extreme Right and Left are yearning for open battle; the Centre, and, indeed, the majority of the nation, wish for nothing except peace. The extremists therefore are busy manœuvring for positions, whilst the Centre is trying to patch up compromises. In Posnania the opposition to Pilsudski is, if anything, hardening; but it does not seem as yet to have decided on its line of attack.

* * *

We commend to the notice of our readers a fund which is being raised by the Women's Committee for the Relief of Miners' Wives and Children. The stoppage in the coal industry follows upon a long period of indifferent trade, during which short time and unemployment have been prevalent; and in many districts distress is acute. The object of the fund to which we refer is to mitigate as far as possible the sufferings of the women and children. A special branch of the fund is being devoted to the provision of milk for infants and nursing mothers. The Chairman of the Committee is Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., and the Hon. Treasurer is Lady Slessor. The address to which contributions should be sent is 11, Tufton Street, Westminster, S.W.1.

LORD OXFORD'S BLUNDER

QUEM deus vult perdere: there are two bodies, prominent in the public eye, who seem bent just now on illustrating this tag afresh. The mine-owners are the one; the other is the cohort of Liberal leaders who have chosen to force a public breach, obviously intended to be final, with Mr. Lloyd George on an issue which will rally to him, and alienate from them, whatever is genuine in Liberalism.

What is the offence that has called forth this amazing sentence of excommunication? Lord Oxford mentions two points: (1) Mr. Lloyd George's refusal, contained in a very moderate letter, to attend a meeting of the "Shadow" Cabinet; (2) his now notorious article in the American Press. Neither of these is, in itself, a point of substance; but there is no mystery about the essential complaint that lies behind them. The complaint is that Mr. Lloyd George showed himself "pro-striker." He was not, of course, pro-striker in the sense of supporting the General Strike. On the contrary, he denounced it, upheld the Government in resisting it, and declared that "the nation must come first and all the time." But he freely criticized the Government's diplomacy and methods; he pleaded for understanding, for a negotiated peace. Thus, to the Jingo, he was "pro-striker," in the same sense that entirely patriotic people are called "pro-German" or "pro-Boer" in time of war. That is his offence.

The crisis, declares Lord Oxford, was "the greatest domestic crisis which the country has had to confront in your time or mine." Certainly. "It was above all things necessary to demonstrate the essential unity of the country." Well, "the essential unity of the country" rings somewhat hollow when the "enemy" was some millions of our countrymen. Surely it is dangerous to press the analogy of war too far. Surely it is less heinous, even from a Die-hard standpoint, to be pro-striker than to be pro-German?

But let us waive this point. Let us treat the General Strike as being on all fours with war; let us give exactly the same weight to the obligation of national unity in the one case as in the other. Since when, we ask, has it been Liberal doctrine that Governments must not be criticized in time of war? Our mind goes back over the long and splendid Liberal tradition. We recall the long war with revolutionary France. We do not find it recorded that Fox and his handful of comrades refrained from criticizing the Government. On the contrary, we find that the stand which they made for moderation and for decency, and in which they persisted with imperturbable courage at the height of the terror of Napoleon, and in face of every form of obloquy, is recorded as one of the proudest memories of Liberalism. We think of other names on the most select roll of honour: of John Bright, of Campbell-Bannerman. Assuredly, if it is an offence to criticize the Government in time of national emergency, the Liberal record comes out badly from the test.

There is, of course, criticism and criticism. But in the present case, Mr. Lloyd George's criticisms were very much to the point. His attacks on the BRITISH GAZETTE for suppressing every manifestation of moderate opinion, including the Archbishop's appeal and Lord Oxford's own speech in the House of Lords, can hardly be said to have impeded the Government in maintaining the vital services. Mr. Lloyd George made a false prediction as to the length of the strike; but, if every leader who made a false prediction were to be expelled from the Party, the crowded ranks of Liberal leadership would speedily be thinned.

By choosing this matter for a public breach, Lord Oxford and his colleagues have not only made the quality of their own Liberalism suspect; they have shown an extraordinary lack of sensitiveness to the main force of Liberal opinion; they seem hardly conscious, indeed, that such a thing exists. Throughout the episode, Mr. Lloyd George has been isolated more completely than he has ever been before, so far as the inner circles of politics are concerned. Opinion within the party in Parliament is strongly hostile to him. The scanty Liberal representation in the House of Commons is largely composed of his old Coalition followers, who have been growing more and more uneasy at his manifest trend towards the Left, but who have clung to him hitherto for the sake of old associations. His attitude during the strike shattered their allegiance in a single stroke. Of the ex-Wee Frees in the House of Commons, a disproportionate number belong to its least progressive wing, and they, too, regarded his conduct as beyond the pale of toleration. It has been calculated that if Mr. Lloyd George's Chairmanship of the Party were to be challenged, not more than half a dozen members would now support him. All this was, of course, well known to Lord Oxford and his advisers, and must have greatly influenced them in their remarkable decision. They seem to have concluded that, if they wished to get rid of Mr. Lloyd George without splitting the party, an exceptionally favourable opportunity had now occurred.

If such calculations were made, they overlooked a vital factor in the problem. There is an entity, which we have called Liberal opinion, which is a different thing, and in the long run a more important thing, than the Parliamentary party. It is a vague entity, but it is a real one. It is not always easy to discern; for, though local associations express it better than the Headquarters machine, they do not always express it adequately. It is the opinion of men to whom Liberalism means something more than a party affiliation, more than a set of dogmas, to whom it means what is sometimes called an attitude of mind. It is the first duty of a Liberal leader to make himself sensitive to this opinion, and not to mistake for it the opinions of those in control of the machine. It was the fact that he had alienated this opinion in his Coalition days that has been the real weakness of Mr. Lloyd George's position in the Liberal Party. It was the fact that this opinion was in the main upon their side that gave Lord Oxford and his colleagues strength.

And now it appears that they are completely insensitive to this opinion; that either they are unaware that it exists or that they despise it. For it is incredible that it will support them on the issue they have raised. We do not mean that one must necessarily disapprove the line they took during the strike, or prefer that of Mr. Lloyd George. But to lay it down—for this is what it comes to—that to err in judgment on the side of conciliation is an offence so outrageous in a Liberal as to call for what Mr. Lloyd George rightly terms an "unprecedented" censure is to do violence to every Liberal instinct.

Oh, the pity of it! That Lord Oxford, whose career has been especially marked by tolerance, equanimity, and loyalty to the Liberal Party, should have taken such a step! We do not know what the outcome will be. Mr. Lloyd George—for whom we shall hardly be suspected of an excessive partiality—has replied with a dignity, moderation, and, in the circumstances, an amazing self-control. It is possible that the matter may be allowed to rest where it now is without any further "overt acts"; though the incident destroys the chance

of the Liberal Party seizing a unique opportunity to recover its position. If the matter is pressed further, it may come to the break-up of the Liberal Party along lines which would have seemed incredible a few years ago. Perhaps it must come to this sooner or later; yet we cannot but deplore the prospect of the first definite breach in the continuity of the British Liberal tradition. What a splendid tradition it has been! We recall Macaulay's famous election speech at Edinburgh in 1839:—

"If you should be pleased to send me to Parliament, I shall enter an assembly very different from that which I quitted in 1834. I left the Whigs united and dominant, strong in the confidence and attachment of one House of Parliament, strong also in the fears of the other. I shall return to find them helpless in the Lords, and forced almost every week to fight a battle for existence in the Commons. Many whom I left bound together by what seemed indissoluble private and public ties I shall now find assailing each other with more than the ordinary bitterness of political hostility. . . . It may be that . . . a long period of Tory domination is before us. Be it so. I entered public life a Whig, and a Whig I am determined to remain. I use that word, and I wish you to understand that I use it in no narrow party sense. I mean by a Whig not one who subscribes implicitly to the contents of any book, though that book may have been written by Locke; not one who approves the whole conduct of any statesman, though that statesman may have been Fox; not one

who adopts the opinions in fashion in any circle, though that circle may be composed of the finest and noblest spirits of the age. But it seems to me that, when I look back on our history, I can discern a great party which has, through many generations, preserved its identity, a party often depressed, never extinguished; a party which, though often tainted with the faults of the age, has always been in advance of the age; a party which, though guilty of many errors and some crimes, has the glory of having established our civil and religious liberties on a firm foundation; and of that party I am proud to be a member. It was that party which forced Charles the First to relinquish the ship-money. It was that party which destroyed the Star Chamber and the High Commission Court. . . . It was that party which opposed the war with America and the war with the French Republic; which imparted the blessings of our free Constitution to the Dissenters; and which, at a later period, by unparalleled sacrifices and exertions, extended the same blessings to the Roman Catholics. . . . I look with pride on all that the Whigs have done for the cause of human freedom and human happiness. . . . While one shred of the old banner is flying, by that banner will I at least be found. The good old cause, as Sidney called it on the scaffold, vanquished or victorious, insulted or triumphant, the good old cause is still the good old cause for me."

"It was that party which opposed the war with America and the war with the French Republic." Such has been the Liberal tradition; and we do not find it well expressed in Lord Oxford's letter.

COAL: THE WAY OUT

HOW long will it take the Government to realize what they must do in order to end the coal stoppage? The replies of the miners and the owners to the Baldwin Memorandum, and more particularly the reply of the owners, leave only one course open. The Government must adopt the hint given by Lord Oxford in the House of Lords on the first day of the general strike; they must follow the precedent of 1912; they must proceed by legislation, and ask Parliament to prescribe, as statutory minima, rates of wages which carry out the indications of the Royal Commission. It has seemed likely from an early stage of the dispute that this would be necessary; it is quite inevitable now.

A concrete proposal along these lines is contained in a letter which appeared in Wednesday's *Times* over the signature of names closely associated with the Liberal Summer School movement. It is there proposed that a measure should be passed enacting:—

"(1) That, until revised as provided in (3) below, the minimum percentage additions to standard rates should be those obtaining in the 1921 agreement.

"(2) That, until revised, the subsistence minima should remain as at present.

"(3) That a National Wages Board, consisting of representatives of mine-owners and miners, together with a strong neutral element, should be constituted, with the power to alter by a majority vote any of the above rates for any district.

"(4) That the modifications proposed by the Commission in the methods of computing the quarterly ascertainment should be carried out."

What exactly is the significance of this proposal? The establishment of a Wages Board with a neutral chairman, which should eventually determine the minimum percentages for the various districts, was part of the Baldwin plan. It was also part of the plan that, in the first instance, "the miners will accept a reduction of per cent. in minimum wages (other than subsistence rates) in all districts." It is evident that any settlement must provide some definite basis for the resumption of work; in other words, that the wages to be paid immediately, before the Wages Board has had time to function, must be defined. The Baldwin plan proposed to define them on the basis of a uniform percentage reduction in all districts, though it did not specify the actual figure. The letter in the *Times* proceeds so far on the same lines and fills in the blank

with 10 per cent. But there is a difference. The Baldwin plan obviously contemplated that the initial uniform cut would represent only a first instalment. It was to be part of a purely interim arrangement for a period of so many weeks, under which the owners were to agree to forgo all profits, and the Government was "to fill the gap with a subsidy." Meanwhile the Wages Board would be at work, under the obligation to decide within three weeks, the chairman in the last resort having arbitral powers. Thus the serious business of wage reduction would rest with this unfortunate chairman; and the initial cut would afford no clue to the magnitude of the sacrifices which the miners would shortly be called upon to make.

The proposal in the *Times* is based upon a different presumption. Now that the stoppage has already lasted for a month, there is very little to be said for basing the resumption of work on a purely transitional, subsidized arrangement, which, while taking something off wages immediately, implies that there is something much worse to follow. It is better to prescribe in the first instance a figure which there is some prospect of maintaining. It is in this spirit that the signatories to the letter have fixed on the 10 per cent. reduction, indicated as necessary by the Commission. It is impossible to stereotype this figure, or any other, especially as it was the Commission's view that the reduction should be greater in some districts and less in others. But while the proposal provides for the possibility of a further lowering of wages in any district, it is no part of the idea that this would necessarily follow. The Wages Board, moreover, would include not only a neutral chairman, but "a strong neutral element," and could only decide by a majority. In these circumstances, if Trade Board experience goes for anything, the miners would have little reason to fear drastic or biased alterations. The proposal, in short, would give the miners for the first time something fairly definite to go upon.

But the essential point is that this, or some similar plan, must be imposed by legislation. "One thing obvious above every other," declared the *Times* in a leading article on Wednesday, "in this intolerably protracted dispute is that a settlement without constraint is impossible." "If there is to be a settlement worth having in the coal-mining industry," declared the *Times* in a leading article on Thursday, "it must be

a settlement by consent, and not by compulsion." Why this startling change of front? It is true that on Wednesday the *Times* proceeded to observe that "since, in the circumstances of to-day, the first step to end the deadlock must be the miners' readiness to accept a reduction of wages, the constraint must first be applied to them," and that its primary purpose in advocating the principle of constraint was to welcome the Government's threat to withdraw the offer of further subsidy at the end of May. But in general terms it proclaimed the necessity of constraining the owners too, referring approvingly to the "unqualified condemnation" passed upon them by the Prime Minister. It is not difficult, however, to see the reason for the change of note. On Wednesday it was thinking of the necessity of carrying out some at least of the reconstruction proposals of the Commission, and of the likelihood that it will prove essential to coerce the owners for this purpose. On Thursday it was dealing with the specific proposal to establish minimum wage-rates by legislation, and it recoiled from the prospect. "The enactment of a minimum wage for miners," it declared, "would tend to bring all wage questions dangerously near to the political arena. That danger must be carefully avoided."

This is a very natural attitude. A considerable period of digestion is required before any responsible person can accommodate himself to the apparently incongruous idea—for this is the gist of the proposal—that the coal-mines need to be treated as a Trade Board industry. Moreover, the proposal to put definite wage figures into an Act arouses a natural aversion. If it were not accompanied by machinery for revision, the proposal would, we agree, be highly objectionable; for Acts of Parliament are rigid things, and wage machinery must be flexible. But this objection does not really apply when appropriate machinery for revision is supplied. In any case, the coal stoppage cannot be ended until the wage-rates to be paid immediately are defined; hence, once the necessity of imposing a settlement is granted, the corollary follows that the wage-rates must, in the first instance, be prescribed by force of law.

Now it is vital that moderate reasonable opinion, such as that for which the *Times* speaks, should appreciate the inexorability of this necessity as soon as possible. It is recognized already so far as reconstruction is concerned. There, it is agreed on all hands, the owners must be coerced, if Mr. Baldwin's pledges are to be fulfilled. But what grounds are there for supposing that the Mining Association may be more open to reason in the matter of wages? The course of events will not move them in this direction. They feel that they are winning; that the defeat of the General Strike has placed all the trump cards in their hand; that, though the struggle may be a long one, they will be able in the end to dictate their terms, perhaps even to smash up the Miners' Federation. No one who studies their reply to Mr. Baldwin can doubt that this is their mood; and, assuredly, they will not become more amenable to Mr. Baldwin's mild expostulations as time goes on. The only possible alternative to minimum wage legislation is the triumph of the owners, and the dictation by them of terms which go outrageously beyond the suggestions of the Samuel Commission.

Mr. Baldwin's honour is deeply pledged to avert any outcome of this kind. "Cannot you trust me to ensure a square deal for the parties, to secure even justice between man and man?" So ran the famous last sentence of his broadcast appeal; famous, because it was at this straw that the T.U.C. leaders clutched; and it was on the strength of it that, professedly at least, they called off the General Strike. Observe the words. Not—cannot you believe that I *desire* a square deal, and will try to persuade the owners to accept one; but—cannot you trust me to *ensure* it? This sentence cannot be treated as a mere rhetorical flourish; Mr. Baldwin's whole reputation is at stake on securing a square deal; and a square deal cannot be reconciled with the terms which the owners are clearly bent on enforcing, with an entire disregard both for Mr. Baldwin's reputation and for the public interest.

DISARMAMENT*

SOCIETIES, like individuals, have their dangerous ages; and in both cases perhaps the most dangerous age of all is the beginning of a new period of existence. In our world a new period began about sixty or seventy years ago. In the West as a whole—apart from certain pioneer countries like Great Britain and France—it was not until the eighteenth-seventies that Democracy and Industrialism became—what they are to-day—the driving and dominating forces in social life. Professor Baker points out that the problem of armaments—in the form in which it menaces and exercises our own generation—is of equally recent growth. This is no coincidence. The two new stimuli which in many respects have so astonishingly increased our vitality are likewise the source of this terrible social cancer, which threatens to bring our civilization to a painful and a shameful end.

Lest we should despair at this thought, we may remind ourselves that every age has not only the defects of its qualities but the qualities of its defects. Consider the four centuries that ended about the year 1875. The initial stimulus of that age was Humanism; the price paid for intellectual progress was political autocracy, of which Europe, on the initiative of England and France, rid herself only gradually and laboriously; but, in the light of our "post-modern" experience (if such a term may be coined to describe the unprecedented and bewildering environment in which it is our own fortune to live), we are beginning to see that the *Ancien Régime*—however defective and even barbarous a system it may have been for the internal government of States—did also benefit in its international relations through its internal autocracy. The apogee of that age was the century and a half which intervened between the end of the Thirty Years' War and the outbreak of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars; and, if we look before and after, we shall come to the conclusion that during those generations Western society was less "militarized" and Western warfare more "civilized" than in any other chapter of Western history hitherto.

"Europe," wrote Gibbon in 1781, "is now divided into twelve powerful, though unequal, kingdoms, three respectable commonwealths, and a variety of smaller, though independent, States. . . . In peace, the progress of knowledge and industry is accelerated by the emulation of so many active rivals: in war, the European forces are exercised by temperate and undecisive contests. . . . Mathematics, chemistry, mechanics, architecture have been applied to the service of war; and the adverse parties oppose to each other the most elaborate modes of attack and defence. Historians may indignantly observe that the preparations of a siege would found and maintain a flourishing colony; yet we cannot be displeased that the subversion of a city should be a work of cost and difficulty, or that an industrious people should be protected by those arts which survive and supply the decay of military virtue. . . . Europe is secure from any future irruption of Barbarians; since, before they can conquer, they must cease to be barbarous. Their gradual advances in the science of war would always be accompanied, as we learn from the example of Russia, with a proportionate improvement in the arts of peace and civil policy; and they themselves must deserve a place among the polished nations whom they subdue."

* "Disarmament." By Professor P. J. Noel Baker. (Hogarth Press. 12s. 6d.)

These words (which no European could write to-day) were written during the American War of Independence, in which four European nations were engaged, but they were not belied by contemporary history. In its conduct and its conclusion, that was a temperate war in Gibbon's sense of the word; but it was unhappily the last of its kind. With the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars, a dozen years later, there began that sinister change in Western warfare which has now made it, once again, as devastating and as obscene as the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Wars of Religion.

Why was eighteenth-century warfare a comparatively mild and decent affair? Because it was mainly conducted, as a hobby, by Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim, and these amiable gentlemen—however much they might become wrapped up in their game—were aware that there was a strict limit to the amount of nuisance which they could legitimately and safely inflict upon their fellow-creatures who were engaged on the serious work of the world. One might purloin his brother's ancestral jack-boots to convert them into toy mortars, or his window-cords to make the tackle for model draw-bridges; and, if one chose, he might even strip the gutter-pipes from his own house in order to melt them down into miniature shot; but as for committing wholesale arson and murder in order to give greater verisimilitude and intensity to the game, Uncle Toby would never have dreamt of it; and if he had, he would have had short shrift from his peremptory brother, whose hobby-horse was of a non-military breed. In the eighteenth century, even the less good-natured and easy-going Uncle Tobies, even such sinister players of the War Game as Frederick the Great, kept more or less within the rules, and those rules effectually prevented the sport of princes from becoming the destruction of society. The eighteenth-century despot's toy army was a nuisance to the farmer, like those flocks of pigeons which were kept by the eighteenth-century seigneur; but it did not threaten to wipe human society off the face of the earth, like the brigand-fanatic soldiery of the Thirty Years' War or like the air forces, tank corps, and chemical warfare staffs in the next war after the War of 1914-1918.

How tolerable an incubus was an eighteenth-century army compared with the armies of to-day! To begin with, its numbers were small in proportion to the total population, and were limited to the more or less constant figure of the permanent peace-time establishment, since your eighteenth-century soldier was a professional with a training so elaborate that it required a life-long career. Professor Baker remarks how easy, from the technical point of view, an agreed restriction of eighteenth-century armies would have been, as he struggles with the problem of finding a formula for restricting armaments in which the total man-power and machine-power of great nations are potentially included. The *levée en masse*, the "nation in arms," are the baneful product of post-Gibsonian democracy. Under the stimulus of the new political idea, the French people in 1792 and the Prussian people in 1813 took up the hobby of Louis XIV and Frederick the Great as a serious national business, to be conducted in deadly earnest, with the sum total of national resources in men and material, and with a religious intensity which reproduced the spirit of Alva's or Tilly's age. Thus was born the mass-warfare and the mass-war-psychology which reached so terrible a pitch, though by no means their possible climax, in the war of 1914-1918. To Gibbon's cultivated, eighteenth-century eye, the world of 1926 would seem a world of barbarians, in which a French or a Japanese nation in arms would be more

repellent on the whole than a warrior tribe of Rifis or Wahhabis or Mahsuds. These survivals of primitive man have merely continued in their original condition, whereas the French and the Japanese and all we "civilized" people who now throw our total national energy and feeling into war when it comes, are apostates who have relapsed into barbarism from a state in which war was a game played by a limited number of professionals according to well-established rules. Averting his gaze from Japan to China—that Utopia of eighteenth-century European philosophers—Gibbon would note with a sigh that the most ancient, polite, and pacific of all peoples was fast militarizing itself by manipulating the latest Western armaments in civil war. He would find little relief till Professor Baker directed his attention to Latin America—a whole continent in which, in 1926, there is only one State maintaining armaments proportionately as great as those which the Allies allowed Germany to retain under the Treaty of Versailles!

The eighteenth-century army was "civilized" in a further sense. Its effectiveness as an instrument of war was relative to the degree of trained skill acquired by the individual soldier, and not to the brute numbers and brute masses of metal which the belligerent Power could throw into the arena. Napoleon first bowed down to the God who was on the side of the big battalions, and our enslavement to mechanical equipment came later still. Professor Baker reminds us that no inventions in the sphere of armaments accompanied the Napoleonic wars; and, for a generation after that, Western armies and fleets continued to dominate others through their human superiority. At Navarino, it was not more powerful ships and guns, but better handling of them that gave the French and English and Russians the victory over the Turks and Egyptians; in the First Afghan War, the muskets of the British Line actually had a shorter range and less precision than the native-made Afghan rifles. It is only during the last fifty years that quantity and complexity of material equipment has become a dominant factor in war, and only during and since the war of 1914-1918 that this factor has passed out of human control. The most disturbing chapters in Professor Baker's book are those in which he describes the *post-war* inventions in chemical and mechanical methods of wholesale destruction. It is a fatality that the age which has turned the sport of kings into the deadly earnest of nations should have also vastly increased our command over physical nature. In applied science, we appear at present to be inventing and discovering at a dizzily increasing velocity; and in a state of society in which the sum-total of national energies and resources is mobilized for war, the possible benefits of these inventions are decidedly outweighed by their lethal potentialities. Aeroplanes, submarines, tractors (used as tanks), gas (used as poison)—these are human triumphs over Nature in which Nature threatens to take a sardonic revenge upon Man. It is evident from Professor Baker's analysis that the newest inventions—*e.g.*, post-war aeroplanes and post-war gas—are the hardest to prevent from being employed unrestrictedly in war with unprecedentedly hideous consequences. This is part of the problem with which the forthcoming League of Nations Disarmament Conference—for which Professor Baker's book is a preliminary study—will have to wrestle. Armaments, which were once the sport of kings and have become the lethal weapons of nations, have now to be restricted to the modest and necessary functions of the policeman's truncheon. Few of us flatter ourselves that this problem is easy, but still fewer dare contemplate the consequences if we fail to solve it.

MR. MACDONALD EXPLAINS AN IMAGINARY INTERVIEW

THE speeches of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald have an extraordinary fascination for me. Perhaps there was a Scottish metaphysician among my unknown ancestors, perhaps it is mere idle curiosity. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that while other men spend their time over acrostics or cross-word puzzles, I occupy mine by trying to understand what Mr. MacDonald is driving at; and since the General Strike this pursuit has become more absorbing than ever.

I was reading the letter which the Labour candidate at North Hammersmith received from his leader, and had come to this sentence, "Let me state with definite clearness the fact that the Government caused the strike and did nothing to end it, but everything to extend and embitter it." Probably it was the "definite clearness" of this statement which paralyzed my senses. I fell asleep.

* * * * *

"That seems rather hard on the Government," said I.

"On the contrary," replied Mr. MacDonald, "it is scrupulously fair. You will find that it is the invariable characteristic of the great British Labour Movement to be scrupulously fair to its opponents, however strongly we may differ from them."

"Well, how do you make out that the Government caused the strike?" I asked.

"By threatening to withdraw the subsidy," replied Mr. MacDonald. "Suppose one of those contemptible demagogic humbugs who arise from time to time wanted to fix upon some cry or slogan which would raise all the fears and passions of the working-class multitudes of this country and came to me for advice, I should say, 'Raise the question of wages; that will settle the whole thing.' That was what the Government did. If they had had one ounce of political gumption they would have said to the mine-owners, 'Talk about reorganization of the industry as much as you like; abolish royalties; make your new selling agencies and your amalgamations and what you will, but do not attempt to lower the miners' standard of life or to increase the hours of labour, or you will have trouble.'"

"But I thought you were against the subsidy," said I.

"So I am," said Mr. MacDonald emphatically; "I regard it as a miserable expedient of bankrupt statesmanship. The Government has wasted tens of millions of the taxpayers' money upon a subsidy, and what did they get for it? Did it avert the stoppage of the coal industry? You know it didn't. Did it prevent a General Strike? No. As soon as it was realized that an attempt was being made to degrade the standard of a million workers, we had the most magnificent and orderly demonstration of working-class solidarity that the world has ever seen. I threw myself heart and soul into that spontaneous expression of the nobility of Labour, for I knew full well that, if the attack upon the miners had succeeded, the standard of the working classes as a whole would have been threatened."

"I thought you had always been opposed to the idea of a general strike," said I.

"So I have," replied Mr. MacDonald. "I have always realized that a general strike for industrial purposes was bound to be defeated. In the first place, a general strike obscures the original issues and raises others not so easy to fight upon. It very soon appears to be a blow aimed at the whole community, and the Gov-

ernment, whether it be drawn from the Tories, the Liberals, or the ranks of the Labour Party itself, is bound to throw all its resources of men, money, and propaganda into the struggle. Any Government which did not take every conceivable step to maintain the vital services of the country against a general strike would be guilty of criminal neglect and the abdication of its proper functions. Another consideration is that, once a general strike has begun, it is difficult to end. The original strikers have a definite object to fight, but in terms of practical policy it becomes harder to define at what point the general strike has succeeded. The action of sympathy must be swift or the value of the motive deteriorates."

"So you expected the strike to fail?" I asked.

"On the contrary," said Mr. MacDonald, "I expected it to succeed, and it did succeed magnificently, beyond my expectations. The Government strove hard to make it political and revolutionary, but was baffled by the sanity of Eccleston Square. The only defeat was suffered by the Government, because it failed completely in its objective. It could not manage to divert the policy of the T.U.C. The term 'unconditional surrender,' if applied at all (and it ought not to be), is more applicable to the Government's position than to the trade unions. By calling off the strike when they did, the T.U.C. won a signal victory. The Government had to be rescued from the impossible position in which they had placed themselves by raising the constitutional issue and declaring that they would not resume negotiations until the strike was called off. If we were saved from revolution, it is the T.U.C. we have to thank, and not the Government."

"Couldn't they have attained that object by not calling the men out?" I asked.

"You are confusing two very different things," retorted Mr. MacDonald. "The men were called out to assist the miners; they were ordered back to save the constitution. Both objects have been fully achieved."

"Both objects?" said I, interrogatively.

"Well, the economics of the coal industry have still to be settled, but the spirit of solidarity amongst our working classes has been wonderfully revealed," returned Mr. MacDonald. "And, as for the other object, the idea of a general strike can for the future be dismissed from the calculations of anyone outside a lunatic asylum. One who has been through this struggle and who has been ardent in advocating it said to me when it was over, 'You will hear less in future about this heresy of ours.' That I can well believe. It has been brought home to the workers by the experience they have passed through, as it could have been brought home in no other way, not only that a strike against the community is bound to fail, but that, if we could conceive of it succeeding, the one thing more disastrous than failure would be success. If we have learned that lesson, as I believe we have, the General Strike will have been well worth while. And there is another clear gain to which we must not be blind: the unity and solidarity of Labour have been established on an imperishable and unassailable basis for ever more."

As he uttered these words Mr. MacDonald was interrupted by jarring, raucous voices; a door burst open and Mr. Cook appeared, accompanied by Mr. John Wheatley and many other irate persons.

"Who went crawling and creeping and begging to the Government?" cried Mr. Cook. "Yah!"

"Who deserted the Labour Movement in its hour of trial?" demanded Mr. Wheatley. "Boo!"

"Coward," "Traitor," "Hypocrite," shouted other voices.

"Let us never forget," cried Mr. MacDonald, in ringing tones which seemed to overwhelm all his assailants, "the unity and solidarity of Labour, and the scrupulous fairness with which we always treat our opponents, however much we may differ from them."

PETER IBBETSON.

LIFE AND POLITICS

THE publication of the Oxford - Lloyd George correspondence fills me with dismay. I knew as everyone did that there had been differences amongst the Liberal leaders about the Strike, but like every Liberal I assumed that as they were differences of tactics not of principles, they did not matter except to political gossips in the Tory papers. What a bitter disillusionment to find Lord Oxford putting a public humiliation upon Mr. Lloyd George in a letter of unexampled severity, and in so doing saving the faces of his enemies and shaming his friends. He even sends his letter to the Press without waiting for Mr. Lloyd George's reply. If Lord Oxford's letter is unexampled in its violence, Mr. Lloyd George's reply is surely, for him, amazing in its meekness of expostulation. This is a miserable business, and the one gleam of comfort one can find is that it is better to quarrel in the open. There is an end at any rate to the subterranean rancour that has poisoned the Liberal Party at its root for so long.

* * *

What is it all about? What was there in Mr. Lloyd George's absence from the "Shadow" Cabinet so to move Lord Oxford to this public fury? Mr. Lloyd George stayed away for reasons which at the moment seemed sufficient to himself. He was too hasty, as he often is; he should have taken the obvious precaution of reading Lord Oxford's House of Lords speech, which made it clear that there was indeed no vital difference among the leaders as to the misdoings of the Government in making the Strike possible and as to the proper way of ending it, even though Lord Oxford's "British Gazette" pronouncement had made it look otherwise. But he rushed in with his letter and gave his enemies their chance. The fuss about the American article seems to me frankly ridiculous. That article shows Mr. Lloyd George suffering once more from the effects of his hastiness: he should not have prophesied at all. The amateur journalist should have copied the wise caution of the professionals. The constructive part of the article struck me as eminently sensible and above all as eminently Liberal. If anyone asks me who as a Liberal comes out best from this affair, I reply, Mr. Lloyd George. He placed the emphasis in the agreed statement of the Liberal policy where it ought to have been placed—on Liberalism. He spoke for conciliation; for freedom of publication; for a just distribution of blame. The entirely unexpected collapse of the General Strike has made it easy to reproach him; but what if the strike had gone on as there was every prospect of its going on? Sooner or later negotiations—yes, negotiations without surrender—would have been imperative to save us from utter ruin. A miracle saved the Government, and now covers with reflected glory the Government's war-time friends. Must we Liberals then face the incredible and assume that Lord Oxford has himself surrendered to the janissaries of his bodyguard, who have only one argument for Mr. Lloyd George—the noose and the sack?

* * *

As a conscientious diarist should, I try to collect the most varied assortment of views that I can. The ex-colonel in the railway carriage; the academic politician murmuring panaceas over the coffee cups; the non-academic politician spoiling for a fight no matter with whom; the man who takes prejudice for reason, and the man in the street whose opinion is often more useful

than reasoning—all are fish to the diarist's net. What I am coming to is the statement that I have found one as yet who regards the mine-owners' letter to the Prime Minister as anything but a piece of impudence. The owners are like a small boy who waits till he has got to a safe distance before breathing defiance. They would not have dared to publish such a letter anytime this last twelvemonth. The State has poured out treasure; the best brains have exhausted themselves in schemes of reform; the world of labour has been disrupted; millions of workmen have acted their protest in sacrifice and loss—and the owners stand fast on the narrowest commercial individualism. Now that they are safe, they cynically allow us to know it. No more hypocrisy about accepting the Report; it has served its turn; all is well—starvation has a clear field, to do our work for us. I think the miners have lost a golden opportunity through sheer mulish obstinacy, but one can respect them and sympathize very deeply with them and their families. For the mine-owners—contempt.

* * *

Mr. A. J. Cook may be crude, he may even be dangerous, though I doubt it, but I believe him to be honest. The most interesting speech of the week, that in which he abuses the T.U.C. leaders for leaving his men in the cart, has all the marks of honest belief. I think Mr. Cook is a bad leader—for instance, he missed a heaven-sent chance in turning down the Samuel memorandum—but he is at least consistent in obstinacy. In this he is in shining contrast with Thomas, MacDonald and company. Mr. Thomas, it is true, has sufficient sense to keep his mouth shut and pray for better times. But Mr. MacDonald, in his Hammer-smith speech, indulged in agonies of mental contortion to make a disaster look like a triumph. He would have done far better to leave it alone; short of the heroic step, not to be expected of any politician, of saying something like this: "Of course, we never wanted a general strike. It was simply bluff, and we never dreamed we should be forced to go on with it. The Government called the bluff, and reduced us all to terror and prostration. At the earliest moment on the faintest shadow of an excuse, we got out of it, and thought ourselves jolly lucky it was no worse." Instead of self-respecting candour, we get a trickle of abject apologies, which convinces nobody, and doesn't even save anybody's face. I repeat, Mr. Cook is wholesome by comparison. He feels he has been let down and says so with manly vigour. One point strikes me as worth emphasis. It has always been part of the T.U.C. case that the Government precipitated the strike at the moment when peace was in sight over the famous "formula," which I understand was really the invention of the ingenious Mr. Thomas, not Lord Birkenhead at all. Mr. Cook makes it clear that there was no such hope of peace over the formula. The miners would have none of it, as they have consistently rejected everything else which commits them to taking lower wages.

* * *

I was one of the first Londoners to explore our newest possession, Gunnersbury Park. The acquisition by the people of two hundred acres of exquisite country has attracted absurdly little notice in the newspapers, whose scale of values gets more and more eccentric. Every inch of land that can be saved from bricks and mortar now that a new era of town expansion is beginning is precious for the future. Here is a park, smaller but fully as beautiful as Kew, in a more mannered style of cultivation. The point to note is that two small local authorities—Ealing and Acton—have combined in a most unusual way to buy the park out of the builders' maw. London's purely artificial divisions, with their competing swarm of authorities, form notoriously the great obstacle to getting big things done in the provision of open spaces for the future. A grasping local authority may think more of the increased rateable value to be derived from a new suburb than of the infinite benefit of a new park. What is wanted, of course, is some all-London authority with power to map out open spaces for the next generation. Otherwise we shall repeat the cruel neglect of our grandfathers,

who too often showed a Gradgrind contempt for people's playgrounds. I am delighted that Mr. Neville Chamberlain, with his family tradition of enlightened municipal effort, realizes all this. There is now some prospect of the Health Ministry setting up an Open Spaces Commission for Greater London. While on this subject, I want to back up the town-planners who, at their conference, urged that the London squares should be thrown open for children to play in. That is the best, perhaps the only, way to save them. Mammon has his eye on the squares, and it will go hard with them unless the public can establish the right of use.

I was one of the multitude of home-bound folks who were kept amused and interested during the blank days by the unctuous voices of the newsmen at 2LO. Considering everything, I thought the job of broadcasting news was done creditably. The Government was completely master of this potent new instrument of suggestion, and Ministers must have been astonished at their own moderation. There was little or no gross propaganda, though there was plenty of politic suppression. The droning of train times proved as soothing as the blessed word Mesopotamia. This being said, I think the B.B.C. would do well to rest on its laurels and not persist in trying to illumine our minds on the coal strike with its "editorials." The experts in that form of entertainment are back at their desks and quite capable of anything that is wanted. The Government can still do what is likes with the wireless, but it should not try to insinuate atmosphere under the guise of impartial summarizing. It is a sound rule to keep off controversy, and the coal strike is acute controversy. Feeling is inflamed, and the most harmless-seeming word will cause impotent fury in some listener, who cannot assert himself like a man at a public meeting by shouting "liar."

I made a Whit-week excursion into my favourite bit of London's fringe. The beechwood country of the Chilterns is less hackneyed than Surrey, and to my mind more beautiful, for it has never broken out into a red rash of villadom. How the valley of the Chess round Chenies and Latimer has escaped is a marvel; if it is due to the autocracy of titled owners, I am for this autocracy—as a Liberal principle, if an absurd paradox may be pardoned. You may stand on the lip of the valley in a gap of the woods near Chenies and see not a house in all the ravishing prospect, except the rosy walls of the hill-perched hall at Latymer. This year the beeches are late in unfolding and wear their early May freshness on the edge of June. The pleasure of the day was checked by two little jars to one's tramper's prejudices. One was finding that motors now worm themselves by some mechanical acrobatics into the remotest, steepest lanes, until lately the last refuge of the walker. The other was the deplorable spectacle of handfuls of bluebells wantonly thrown by the paths to die. What impish stupidity impels people to pluck flowers they do not even want? This is even worse country manners than the habit, still too common, of leaving food wrappings in the meadows.

A small boy of my acquaintance, asked whether he knew the meaning of Empire Day, replied, with some indignation, "Of course. It's the day God saved the King."

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MR. BALDWIN

SIR,—Who is Mr. A. A. Milne, and what is his father's house that he should take upon himself to sneer delicately at the Prime Minister? We all know Mr. A. A. Milne. He is pre-eminently the Charming Author. (I venture to borrow his own device of Subtly Derisive Capital Letters.) No one excels him at pattering pretty verses for children of all ages; he can prattle gracefully about anything or nothing, is not a bad hand at the first act of a play, and all the young ladies from sixteen to sixty agree that as an essayist he is Perfectly Sweet. But the character of the

Prime Minister is too big for his elfin grasp. I am not brilliant and successful, like Mr. A. A. Milne, though I have had before now the honour of appearing in your columns. But, like many other not particularly brilliant people, I have been able during the last fortnight, amid the welter of shams and lies and poisonous perversions of the truth, amid strutting exhibitions of puffed-up egotism, amid the open confusion of the wise and prudent, and the crash of falling reputations, to behold not only the beauty but the power of the spirit untainted with self. This white light suddenly pierced the fog, and wherever it fell the truth was revealed. We saw men and things for what they were, and some of us will never forget that moment of apocalypse. Since it did not come to Mr. A. A. Milne, we can afford to pity the clever young man whose very cleverness has blinded him. We cannot make him see. All that we can say to him is this—that he has missed one of history's noblest moments. He does not feel, as some of us do, that when the Prime Minister is mentioned we ought to stand in silence. We cannot suggest that he should stand, but we can and do recommend silence to him—silence, that is, on this particular subject.—Yours, &c.,

DOROTHY JOHNSON.

THE COAL PROBLEM

SIR,—Perhaps you will kindly permit me a word in reply to Mr. Arnold Lupton's letter as contained in your issue of May 1st.

If Mr. Lupton will look up the unemployment figures for two comparative periods, with and without the subsidy, he will find that cheaper coal has not stimulated employment. And that unemployment was worse in the coalmining and allied industries during the first quarter of this year than it was during the corresponding period of last year, although coal was from 3s. to 4s. per ton cheaper.

He will also find that we have not received any additional revenue from our export trade as a consequence of cheaper coal, but have, on the contrary, given the foreign consumer more coal for less money.—Yours, &c.,

ALFRED MORGAN.

Park Crescent, Bargoed, Cardiff.

May 22nd, 1926.

NEW WEALTH IN COAL

SIR,—Everyone desires a settlement in the coal industry, and will support the Prime Minister in his efforts to secure it, but no solution of the present difficulty can alter the international situation. It is notorious that there is a glut of coal in the world caused by increased production and alternative water and oil power. If, therefore, coal is to continue to add to our national wealth, and to provide employment to the same degree as in the past, new and better use must be made of its constituents.

As the Coal Commission said, "it is clearly a matter of prime importance" to introduce methods which obviate the waste of coal's valuable constituents. For many years such methods have been tried by scientists, but none have yet shown commercial profits on the amount of capital expended. The most advanced and the one on which most capital has been spent is the Parker process. The unfortunate history of Low Temperature Carbonization, Limited, which owns this process, is well known to investors, and a scheme has been approved by the Court for its reorganization.

I have agreed to become Chairman of the reconstructed Company, influenced by a belief that in this method of getting the best out of coal lies the true solution of the difficulties of mine-owners and miners, and, indeed, of many of the troubles of industry as a whole.

The test carried out by the Fuel Research Board proved absolutely that the process was scientifically sound, and achieved the results represented with regard to it.

We intend now to demonstrate that it is a commercial proposition, when applied on a large scale.

If so, and if the process be exploited properly, there will follow a diversion of labour in the coalfields to ancillary industries, and ultimately there will be obtained from coal enough oil for our national needs, as well as motor spirit of high calorific value, and an abundant supply of smokeless fuel as efficient in calorific value and for all purposes as raw coal.—Yours, &c.,

ARTHUR WHEELER.

Woodhouse Eaves, Loughborough.

May 22nd, 1926.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By LYTTON STRACHEY.

DR. PAGET TOYNBEE* is to be congratulated on bringing to a close the monumental edition of Horace Walpole's Letters, the first volume of which appeared, under the editorship of Mrs. Toynbee, in 1903. The enormous and exquisite structure stands before us in all its Palladian beauty, and we can wander through it at our ease, conducted, as we go, by the most patient and accurate of scholars. This final volume is the third of the supplement and the nineteenth of the whole collection. Its contents are miscellaneous—the gleanings of the great correspondence: more than a hundred new letters by Walpole, together with a most interesting selection of those addressed to him by every variety of person, from the elder Pitt, at the height of his glory, to James Maclean, the highwayman. Walpole's own letters come from every period of his life. A delightful series to Sir Charles Hanbury Williams shows us the first sprightly runnings of that inimitable manner: one dip, and we are in the very middle of the eighteenth century. "My Lady Townshend," we learn, "has taken a room at Brompton to sleep in the air. After having had it eight days without having been there within six hours of the evening, she set out to other night with Dorcas, and moveables and household stuff, and unnecessary enough to have staid there a fortnight. Night-shifts, and drops, and her supper in a silver saucepan, and a large piece of work to do, four books, paper, and two hundred crow quills. When she came there it was quite dark: she felt her way up to her bedchamber, felt she did not like it, and felt her way down again. All this before the woman of the house could get candles. When she came down her coach was gone. . . ."

Then there are some excellent examples of the brilliant middle period: "The spring desires I would tell your Ladyship that it is waiting for you on this side of Chantilly": no one could mistake the author of that phrase. Finally, the mature virtuosity of Walpole's long old age is admirably represented. His last letter turns out not to be the famous one addressed on January 9th, 1797, to Lady Ossory. Three days later the old connoisseur was able to dictate some lines to the Rev. Mark Noble. "Mr. Roscoe," he characteristically declared, "is, I think, by far the best of our historians, both for beauty of style and for deep reflections." So much for Mr. Gibbon! "I was sorry, sir, I missed the pleasure of seeing you when you called. . . . I should have been glad to see that coin or medal you mention of Lord Arundel. . . ." And so, as is fitting, with no particular flourish—with the ordinary amenity of a gentleman, the fascinating creature passes from our sight.

Amid so much that is perfect it may seem a little ungracious to make, or rather to repeat, a complaint. But it is the very perfection that raises one's standard and sharpens one's disappointment, when expectations, satisfied so long and so continuously, are suddenly dashed. The editor is still unable to resist meddling with his text. The complete edition is incomplete, after all. Apparently, we should blush too much were we

to read the whole of Walpole's letters; those privileges have been reserved to Dr. Toynbee alone. It was impossible not to hope that, after so prolonged a tête-à-tête with his author, he would relent at last; perhaps, in this latest volume at any rate—but no! the powers of editorship must be asserted to the bitter end; and the fatal row of asterisks and the fatal note, "passage omitted" occur, more than once, to exacerbate the reader. Surely it would have been kinder not to reveal the fact that any deletion had been made. Then one could have read on, innocent and undisturbed. As it is, when one's irritation has subsided, one's imagination, one's shocking imagination, begins to work. The question must be asked: do these explicit suppressions really serve the interests of the highest morality? Dr. Toynbee reminds one of the man who * But enough; for, after all, it is not the fly but the ointment that claims our attention.

And, indeed, the ointment is rare and rich, of a subtle and delicious perfume. The aroma of a wonderful age comes wafting out from these few hundred pages, and enchants our senses. Why is it that the eighteenth century so particularly delights us? Are we perhaps simply reacting against a reaction? Is the twentieth century so fond of the eighteenth because the nineteenth disliked it so intensely? No doubt that is partly the reason; but the whole truth lies deeper. Every age has a grudge against its predecessor, and generally the grudge is well founded. The Romantics and the Victorians were probably right: they had good reason to dislike the eighteenth century, which they found to be intolerably rigid, formal, and self-satisfied, devoid, to an extraordinary degree, of sympathy, adventure, and imagination. All this was perfectly true. A world, for instance, in which Voltaire's criticism of Hamlet, or Walpole's of Dante—"a methodist parson in Bedlam"—could be meant seriously and taken seriously would certainly have been a most depressing world to live in. The nineteenth century, very properly, revolted, broke those chains, and then—proceeded to forge others of its own invention. It is these later chains that we find distressing. Those of the eighteenth century we cannot consider realistically at all; we were born—owing to the efforts of our grandfathers—free of them; we can afford to look at them romantically; we can even imagine ourselves dancing in them—stately minuets. And for the purposes of a historical vision, the eighteenth century is exactly what is wanted. What would have been, in fact, its most infuriating quality—its amazing self-sufficiency—is precisely what makes it, in retrospect, so satisfying; there hangs the picture before us, framed and glazed, distinct, simple, complete. We are bewitched by it, just as, about the year 2000, our descendants, no doubt, will cast longing eyes towards the baroque enchantments of the age of Victoria.

But, just now, to consider thus is to consider too curiously. With this book in one's hand, it is impossible to be anything but romantic: facts vanish; the hardest heart collapses before this triumph of superficial charm. There is a divine elegance everywhere, giving a grace to pomposity, a significance to frivolity,

* "Supplement to the Letters of Horace Walpole." Edited with Notes and Indices by Paget Toynbee, M.A., D.Litt. Vol. III.: 1744-1797. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 12s. 6d. net.)

* Passage omitted.

and a shape to emptiness. The English language takes on new shifts and guises. One discovers a subtle employment of *shall* and *should* as the future indicative in the formal third person singular—a truly beautiful usage, which must send a delicious shiver down the backbone of every grammarian. Nor is it only in the letters of the grand master, of Walpole himself, that these graces are evident; they are scattered everywhere over the pages of his correspondents. This is how, in those days of leisure and urbanity, a Prime Minister said, "Thank you for your kind letter":—

"The impressions I am under from the honour of your letter are too sensible not to call for expression. As often as I have read it, for 'tis best to confess) I do indulge myself in the frequent repetition, I am at some loss to decide which sort of pleasure such a letter is made to excite most; that delight which springs from wit, agrément and beauty of style, or the serious and deep-felt satisfaction which the possession of so kind and honourable a Testimony must convey."

It was annoying, doubtless, to be held up by highwaymen in the Park; but there were compensating advantages; one might receive, a few days later, a letter beginning as follows:—

"Sir, seeing an advertisement in the papers of to Day giving an account of your being Rob'd by two Highway men on wednesday night last in Hyde Parke and during the time a Pistol being fired whether Intended or Accidentally was Doubtfull Oblidges us to take this Method of assuring you that it was the latter and by no means Design'd Either to hurt or frighten you."

These are unusual occasions; it is in the everyday word, the casual gesture, that one perceives, still more plainly, the form and pressure of the time. The Duchess of Bedford asks Mr. Walpole to buy a bust of Faustina for her at a sale. "If it is tolerable," she adds; and nobly makes no mention of a price. And then—"Lord Huntingdon with his Compliments sends Mr. Walpole, according to promise, a little Spanish snuff. Having left off taking any, from finding that it disagreed with him, he hopes Mr. Walpole will be so much his friend as to keep possession of his box." Could delicate suavity go further? Sometimes the ladies' pens frisk and pirouette in irresponsible fantasy. Lady Lyttelton, in a mad letter, all dashes and exclamations, seems to forestall the style of Tristram Shandy; and Miss Mary Carter—unknown to fame—winds up an epistle full of vague and farcical melancholy, with—"I will not take up more of that precious stuff of which Life is composed but to assure You that I am with great Esteem and Respect yr most Obedt Moll Volatile Evaporated."

The precious stuff of which Life is composed flowed away gaily, softly, without any fuss whatever. The old letter-writer and letter-receiver, in his fortunate island, with his pens and paper, his Berrys, his gout and his memories, continued, as the century drew to its end, to survey the world with a dispassionate civility. There were changes, certainly; the French had become "a worse race than Chictaws and Cherokees"; but it hardly mattered. The young men stopped powdering their hair; even that could be met with a lifted eyebrow. Were there other, even more terrible revolutions brewing? Perhaps; but the Earl of Orford would not heed them. Machinery? Yes, he had indeed noticed it, and observed one day to Hannah More, in his clever fashion, that it might be used for making sugar, so that by its intervention "the poor negroes" could be saved from working. He passed on to more interesting subjects, his tranquillity unshaken; it remained unshaken to the end. He departed, happily unconscious that the whole system of his existence was doomed to annihilation—elegantly unaware of the implications of the spinning jenny.

SCIENCE

RELATIVITY AND RELIGION

By BERTRAND RUSSELL.

DR. WHITEHEAD'S new book* is of first-rate importance. It contains new logical hypotheses in regard to the structure of the physical world, which are certainly calculated to diminish the difficulties of the Quantum Theory, and are held by the author to afford a reconciliation of science with religion, art, and morals. There is a breadth of culture which is truly astonishing: the author is at home, not only, as one would expect, in mathematics and physics, but in the obscurer portions of mediæval history, the discussions at the Council of Trent, the influence of Greek drama and Roman law upon modern science, &c., &c., &c. The easier portions of the book contain admirable sayings, and characterizations of historical periods which are at once witty and profound. The reader who is prepared to ignore the difficult passages can rely upon several hours of delicate delight from Dr. Whitehead's survey of mankind.

Dr. Whitehead has a thesis for the intellect and a thesis for the emotions. The validity of the latter depends upon the validity of the former, which must therefore be examined first. In broad outline, his intellectual thesis is as follows: The great system of physics which arose in the seventeenth century and has dominated scientific thought ever since depended upon three habits of mind: first, the belief in natural law and the validity of induction; second, an interest in, and respect for, "stubborn facts"; third, a certain type of materialism, which is defined as belief in "simple location," i.e., the belief that everything is definitely somewhere, and not also elsewhere, in space and time—or in space-time, when we reach the modern theory of relativity. The first of these habits of mind, according to Dr. Whitehead, is inconsistent with the third; he therefore substitutes a new and more complex theory of location, which destroys materialism while leaving physics intact. This new theory has already been explained, in its main features, in Dr. Whitehead's previous books; the main novelty in this book is the historical treatment and the deduction of consequences interesting to religion and morals. The theory is difficult, and cannot be explained in popular language; nevertheless, something can be said about it.

What may be called the billiard-ball theory of the physical world dominated the thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but began to break down with the general acceptance of the undulatory theory of light; all attempts to regard the æther as a number of little billiard balls were failures. Electromagnetism made the failure of such attempts still more evident. Then came relativity and quanta, both of which required still more difficult adjustments. Dr. Whitehead maintains that the theory of simple location is now in as bad a way as the theory of epicycles was before Copernicus, and that simplicity is only to be recovered by means of a new start. However, the new start which he advocates is suggested by Bergson rather than by the technical needs of physics. He is not content with substituting simple location in space-time for simple location in space and time. He regards everything as having aspects everywhere, which are apparently not separate entities related to the thing, but genuine parts of the thing itself. And he argues that the ultimate conception is that of "organism." An organism which contains no organic parts is called a "primate." "A proton, and perhaps an electron, would be an association of such primates, superposed on each other, with their frequencies and spatial dimensions so arranged as to promote the stability of the complex organism, when jolted into accelerations of locomotion." This passage illustrates one of the difficulties in forming

* "Science and the Modern World." By Alfred North Whitehead, F.R.S., Sc.D. (Cambridge), Hon. D.Sc. (Manchester), Hon. LL.D. (St. Andrews), Fellow of Trinity College in the University of Cambridge, and Professor of Philosophy in Harvard University. Lowell Lectures, 1926. (Cambridge. 12s. 6d.)

a critical estimate of Dr. Whitehead's theory. There is no hint anywhere of the reason for distinguishing between an electron and a proton in respect of their relation to "primates." Until the theory is set forth in a complete formal manner, it is impossible to know what it can accomplish in the way of a new analysis of physical notions. An organism is obviously complex, but it is not clear what are its ultimate constituents for Dr. Whitehead.

There is no doubt that the author is right in accusing traditional physics of what he aptly calls "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness." We can, he says, from what actually exists, construct logical systems of entities which will have the property of "simple location," and may be called bits of matter. But traditional physics erred in regarding bits of matter as concrete; they are really logical abstractions. Of this there can now be little doubt; the question is: What can we regard as really concrete? On this point, Dr. Whitehead is profoundly influenced by Bergson's belief in interpenetration, which he even carries further, since he regards the present as containing implicitly not only the past, but the future. In this connection he quotes:—

"The prophetic soul

Of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

We are to understand that the world is a logical continuum, not validly analyzable into bits, and that, when it dreams of things to come, those things are already existing now in the dream. (I do not know what happens when the dream does not come true.) The view that the world is a logical continuum had been made familiar by the Hegelians, before Bergson. The chief intellectual merit which Dr. Whitehead claims for it is that it solves the puzzles about induction and causality which Hume set forth, and which the men of science have never succeeded in answering. They had, he says, nothing to oppose to Hume except blind faith:—

"It illustrates the anti-rationalism of the scientific public that, when Hume did appear, it was only the religious implications of his philosophy which attracted attention. This was because the clergy were in principle rationalists, whereas the men of science were content with a simple faith in the order of nature. Hume himself remarks, no doubt scoffingly, 'Our holy religion is founded on faith.' This attitude satisfied the Royal Society but not the Church. It also satisfied Hume, and has satisfied subsequent empiricists."

This is perfectly true: it must be admitted that induction rests upon faith. But except for those who retain this faith, a logic cannot be recommended on the ground that it justifies induction. I think, therefore, that the appeal to faith is still present in Dr. Whitehead's system.

To the present reviewer it seems—though perhaps mistakenly—that Dr. Whitehead's theory consists of two parts: on the one hand, a logical construction leading to physics from a new set of non-material fundamentals, wholly admirable and profound; on the other hand, a metaphysic believed by the author to be bound up with his logical construction, but in fact—again I speak with diffidence—separable from it. The metaphysic is not essentially new: it is approximately that of Bergson or Plotinus. There is a God who is metaphysically old-fashioned: He resembles Jehovah rather than the Absolute. His function is to settle which possibilities shall be actual, *i.e.*, He is a Creator. "God is the ultimate limitation, and His existence is the ultimate irrationality. For no reason can be given for just that limitation which it stands in His nature to impose. God is not concrete, but He is the ground for concrete actuality. No reason can be given for the nature of God, because that nature is the ground of rationality." I must confess with regret that I have failed to understand Dr. Whitehead's argument on this important subject. And, speaking generally, I cannot persuade myself that his logical reconstruction of physical concepts has any such tendency as he attributes to it, to restore the consolations of religion to a world desolated by mechanism. However, before feeling any certainty on this point we must wait until he has given us a fuller and more systematic explanation of his doctrine.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

MR. O'CASEY'S new play, "The Plough and the Stars," at the Fortune Theatre is a less competent piece of work than "Juno and the Paycock," and the author should not entirely be judged upon it. Nevertheless its main virtues and defects are the same as those of "Juno," and enable us to see more clearly the powers and limitations of the author. Mr. O'Casey is always on the side of the angels; he is a brilliant reporter with a good sense of humour, and must have a very good moral influence in a country where vanity and moral cowardice go for so much. He does one thing well and frequently, that of throwing scenes of buffoonery on to a background of atrocity. The dialogue in itself seems to me to have no artistic value, never once to be moulded, as Synge moulded his dialogue, into an artistic shape. His style is provincial and never becomes *régionaliste*, and his object is to use local colour as an end in itself rather than to develop an art form out of the materials nearest to his hand. Needless to say, his mind is much fresher than that of most playwrights, and his plays far more worth seeing than most of those running in London. But he has not taken the first step towards becoming an artist in the severer sense of the word. Economists may note with pleasure that one staple industry, an Irish one, that of gratifying English complacency by the portrayal of Irish absurdity, is as going a concern as it ever was in the good old days. There was some good acting at the Fortune Theatre, particularly by Miss Sarah Allgood and Mr. Arthur Sinclair, but the play was taken too slowly and the production was generally nerveless.

* * *

"They Knew What They Wanted," by Sidney Howard, at the St. Martin's Theatre, combines amusement with as much instruction as a work of art need profess. Without being a great play, it is very refreshing and humane, and though obviously the work of an intellectual (there is no opprobrium attaching to the word), one is never conscious of a thesis except what is contained in the title. It is a "present-day story of the wine-growing district of California," and is made up of the very simplest elements. Although a stringent analysis might reveal a certain amount of sentimentality and a spice of uplift, the treatment is tactful, the more emotional scenes so admirably short, that one's pleasure in the portrayal of very live human beings is never ruffled. Mr. Basil Dean's production is also highly tactful, and the acting throughout is so excellent and convincing that to pick anyone out would be invidious. One may, however, mention Mr. Glenn Anders's "Joe" as an object lesson. Why are these young American actors so whole, so convincing, so agreeable? The reason, I think, is that there is not the slightest hint of the *jeune premier* or *première* about them. They rely entirely upon their inward personality, their belief in their own talents. It is amusing to compare this play with the dead-alive crook nonsense, "Intimate Enemies," by Xenia Lowinsky and Norman McKinnel at the Savoy, where drama has been founded upon drama instead of upon life, with the usual results. The actors themselves seemed to be angry at this ridiculous play, and the only praise that can be given is to Miss Frances Ivor and Mr. Donald Charles for studied renderings of small parts. It may be worth while to note that at the St. Martin's Theatre the programme contains a "Who's Who" of the actors, instead of the horribly vulgar "Magazine Programme," which seems designed to stultify still further the intelligence and aesthetic perception of the theatre-going public.

* * *

I was rather impressed by "The Big Parade" film at the Tivoli. It is very American. It professes to give a picture of the Great War from the point of view of the American private. The pictures of the actual fighting are not particularly convincing, though they are really exciting. But some of the pictures of the troops moving up to the front line and of other preliminaries to the battle are extremely good. The inevitable accom-

paniment of the love story is not unamusing, but the sentimentality is piled on pretty thick, and I think the American film-producer over-estimates the length of time which a mother spends on embracing her son who has returned from the wars. Still there is a commendable go about this film, and sometimes real beauty. The audience were on the whole enthusiastic, but obviously memories make these war films very painful to a good many people. The film was preceded by half an hour of Mr. Paul Whiteman's Band—"I simply loathe this tune, but I can't help admiring the way they play it," as I heard someone behind me remark. Most of the audience, however, loved both the tune and the way they play it.

Covent Garden was as full for the second performance of "Figaro" (last week) as for the first. And yet no one who had heard "Siegfried" the night before could fail to notice that, popular though he is, Mozart cannot stir a London audience to the same pitch of enthusiasm as Wagner. Even the first two acts of "Siegfried," which are the least stirring part of the whole Ring, were received with cheers. "Figaro" could only win decorous applause. It must be the sense of effort, of terrific obstacles heroically overcome, that makes an audience not merely clap, but shout. The art that conceals art can never hope for such a welcome. Both performances were good; neither was perfect. In "Figaro" the women acted with spirit. Lotte Lehman sang divinely. Mozart has set the Countess a severe task. She must equal his own artistic sincerity. In the middle of this farce he has given her two of the most perfect tragic arias in all music. They must be sung, as they are written, without a suspicion of emotional quackery. In these moments Lotte Lehman was beyond praise. Elisabeth Schumann is the ideal Susanna. She has such a mastery of phrasing that she can put subtlety even into the recitative. But the men all under-acted. And when a great part of the time is occupied by German patter, which, though brilliantly delivered, is unintelligible to 90 per cent. of the audience, lively acting alone can sustain the interest. When I compared the two foundlings of Monday and Tuesday nights, I had no doubt that Siegfried was a more comic figure than Figaro. It was a mistake, too, to keep the same cast and change the conductor. The actors were much better rehearsed than is usual in Grand Opera. They knew exactly what they wanted. When Herr Heger wanted something different, there was a tussle. In the "Letter" duet the orchestra began much too fast. The Countess applied the brakes and got the tempo back to normal. But the effort upset her balance and she made a false entry. Disaster was averted, but the charm of this loveliest of songs was destroyed. But these are trifles. To the Opera Syndicate I say, "Thank you. Now give us 'Don Giovanni.'"

Saturday, May 29.—Adolphe Hallis, piano recital, at 3, at Queen's Hall.

Chelsea Promenade Concert, at Chenil Galleries.

Hofman, piano recital, at 3, at Wigmore Hall.

Sunday, May 30.—"A Bird in the Hand . . .", Play-mates, at Maskelyne's Hall.

"Getting Mother Married," Play Actors, at the Apollo.

Monday, May 31.—"Twelfth Night," at Maddermarket, Norwich.

Æolian Players Concert, at 8.30, at Chenil Galleries.

Sir Richard Lodge on "Modern English Historians: Lecky," at 5, at University College.

Anton Maskoff, violin recital, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.

Tuesday, June 1.—"Hearts and Diamonds," light opera, at the Strand.

J. H. Thomas, M.P., and G. K. Chesterton on "Is the House of Commons of any use?" at 5.30, at London School of Economics.

OPERA.

LYRIC, Hammersmith. EVENINGS, at 8.15. (For 3 Weeks only.)

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

FREDERICK RANALOW and SYLVIA NELIS.

MATINEES, WED & SAT., at 2.30. (Riverside 3012.)

THEATRES.

ALDWYCH, Gerr. 3929. EVENINGS, at 8.15.

MATINEES, WED. & FRI., at 2.30.

A CUCKOO IN THE NEST.

TOM WALLS. YVONNE ARNAUD. RALPH LYNN.

COURT, Sloane Square. Sloane 5137 (2 lines.)

NIGHTLY, at 8.15. MATINEES, WED., THURS. & SAT., at 2.15.

THE FARMER'S WIFE

3RD YEAR AND LONDON'S LONGEST RUN.

CRITERION. EVENINGS, 8.40. MATS., TUES., SAT., 2.30.

MARIE TEMPEST in

THE CAT'S-CRADLE.

DRURY LANE. EVENINGS, 8.15. MATS., WED. & SAT., 2.30.

ROSE MARIE. A Musical Play.

NELSON KEYS. EDITH DAY. DEREK OLDHAM.

FORTUNE. Ger. 3855. EVGS., at 8. MATS., WED., SAT., 2.30.

THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS.

By SEAN O'CASEY.

HIPPODROME, London Ger. 650.

EVENINGS, at 8.15. MATS., WED., THURS. & SAT., at 2.30.

MERCENARY MARY.

ALL SEATS BOOKABLE. BOX OFFICE 10 to 10.

KINGSWAY. (Ger. 4032.) EVENINGS, at 8.15.

THE MARVELLOUS HISTORY

OF ST. BERNARD

MATINEES, WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY, at 2.15.

LITTLE. (Reg. 2401.) EVENINGS, at 8.30.

AUTUMN FIRE.

With GODFREY TEARLE. MATS., WED., FRI., 2.30.

LONDON PAVILION. (Ger. 0704.) NIGHTLY, at 8.15.

CHARLES B. COCHRAN'S REVUE (1926).

MATINEES, TUESDAY & SATURDAY, at 2.30.

CINEMAS.

NEW GALLERY KINEMA, Reg. 3212. Exclusive presentation of the film version of OSCAR WILDE'S Famous Play, "LADY WINDEMERE'S FAN" daily, at 3.35, 6.35 & 9.35.

POLYTECHNIC, Regent Street. (Mayfair 2330.)

THE COURT TREAT EXPEDITION FILM.

CAPE TO CAIRO.

DAILY, at 2.30, 6 & 8.30.

TIVOLI. Ger. 5222.

THE BIG PARADE

TWICE DAILY, at 2 & 8. SUNDAY, 6 & 8.30.

In addition PAUL WHITEMAN'S BAND, Twice Daily (except Sundays).

ART EXHIBITION.

LEICESTER GALLERIES, Leicester Sq. 10—6. Sats., 10—1.

Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture by DUNCAN GRANT, Roger Fry, V. Bell, B. Adeney, F. J. Porter, Keith Baynes, and Frank Dobson.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

RACIAL FANTASIES

I HAVE been reading two books which, in their different ways, confirm my belief that no illusions and hallucinations are quite so persistent in otherwise intelligent people than those connected with race. The two books are themselves very dissimilar. The first is "To-day and To-morrow; the Testing Period of the White Race," by J. H. Curle (Methuen, 6s.). Mr. Curle, whose "The Shadow Show" some readers will remember, has produced a readable and well-written book. Where he confines himself to descriptions of what he has seen in his many travels he is quite entertaining; when he tells us the impressions which his varied experiences have made upon him, he provides us with psychological facts which may or may not be valuable; but where he argues about the future of mankind, the superiority of the white race, and the folly of democracy, he is asking us to accept the truth of certain premises which have but little more substance than the illusions of sleep or the hallucinations of high fever. The other book is "Race and History, an Ethnological Introduction to History," by Eugène Pittard (Kegan Paul, 21s.). This is a severely scientific work, upon which, as a layman, I suppose I have no right to express an opinion. But there is nothing in it which is not understandable by the ordinary man, and I certainly found it extremely interesting as showing the view which a distinguished Professor of Anthropology can take to-day of the influence of race upon history. The greater part of the book consists of a fairly detailed inquiry, based on skull-measurements, &c., into the racial origin and characteristics of the chief nations and peoples of the world. Professor Pittard is a genuine scientist, and in the course of his survey destroys a good many racial hallucinations, including most of Mr. Curle's, but when it comes to the question of the positive contributions of ethnology to history, I remain sceptical. I can admire the mental acrobatics which are required for building up a pyramid of hypotheses, but I can see no reason for believing that the apex of a pyramid of hypotheses is anything but a hypothesis, and usually an extremely shaky one.

On the jacket of Mr. Curle's book one reads: "A survey of mankind which shows the Whites of Western Europe, because of their balance and their originating brain, to be the best hope of the world." On the jacket of Professor Pittard's book one reads: "Professor Pittard has made an anthropometric survey of the countries whose populations have made history. . . . On the whole he pronounces against the popular theory that race has made history." Mr. Curle supports the popular theory for which the scientist finds no evidence. Mr. Curle's racial illusions are indeed founded on premises which are continually contradicted by the anthropometric survey. "No peoples are pure in blood to-day," Mr. Curle admits, "but," he goes on, "many are reasonably pure." And he categorically announces that the Southern French are "Mediterraneans." This is what Professor Pittard has to say about the French:—

"To sum up. The French population is an ethnic complex. Around a palæolithic nucleus, itself made up of different anatomical elements, various human types, come from different regions, have successively aggregated from neolithic times onwards. Nevertheless, it is not to be thought that the multiplicity of groups mentioned in History represents an equal multiplicity of

racés. If these groups had remained strictly separate it would be easy enough to perceive it. But juxtaposition, intermixture, and cross-breeding have increased the apparent complexity. France presents itself to ethnologists as a synthesis of Europe: it would appear to include more ethnic types even than Italy."

The evidence for the existence of a "Mediterranean" race must come from ethnology. But if the evidence of ethnology shows that the palæolithic nucleus already 35,000 years ago was not pure, and that ever since neolithic times 10,000 years ago France has been a melting-pot for a multiplicity of races, what sense is there in saying that the French racially are "reasonably pure," or in labelling them "Mediterranean"?

It is true that after labelling the Southern French "Mediterranean" and the Northern French "Nordic," Mr. Curle informs us that the French are a composite of Mediterranean, Nordic, and Alpine. He also informs us that both he himself and the Life-force (whatever that may be) know that "the ideal white strain needs all three stocks." If the Life-force has been responsible for moulding human history, much is explained in that "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," by the fact that the Life-force shares Mr. Curle's racial hallucinations.

There are two interesting points about these racial fantasies. The first is that those who suffer from them are fortunate enough always to find that the race to which they happen to belong is the purest and the best—in fact, the hope of the world. The fact that Etonians are convinced that Eton, and Harrovians that Harrow, is the best public school is of purely psychological interest, and if the German racial enthusiasts discovered that the French was the superior race, or if Mr. Curle suddenly found the "best hope of the world" in the Whites of Eastern Europe, or even the Yellows of Western Asia, one might be more inclined to take them seriously. Secondly, although every person now living in the world is a racial mongrel, although miscegenation has been proceeding at all times and in all places throughout Europe and Asia for the last 35,000 years, Mr. Curle and his school see some mystic elixir for civilization in keeping the White or the Nordic or the Mediterranean "race" (according as the taste for races happens to be) pure. The mere idea of miscegenation makes them shudder. Mr. Curle thinks Brazil a glorious country and likes her people, but when he sees Germans, Brazilians, Syrians, Indians, Italians, and Chinese marrying there, he says: "This miscegenation horrifies me, and must lead to a vast futility." But there is not the least reason to believe that miscegenation leads to "a vast futility," or that it has any harmful effects upon a population at all. Mr. Curle's "Whites of Western Europe" are themselves the result of miscegenation; why should he be horrified by the mixture of "races" now going on in Brazil, if he believes that the mixture of "races" which produced the Whites of Western Europe gave us what he calls our "splendid pedigree," "raised us above the Whites of Eastern Europe by greater stability, and above the whole coloured world by our originating brain," and made us "the world's best hope"?

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

ARISTOTLE UP TO DATE

The Art of Being Ruled. By WYNDHAM LEWIS. (Hatto & Windus. 18s.)

MR. WYNDHAM LEWIS has at least all the arrogance of genius. In his introduction he makes the excellent remark that "most books have their *patients*, rather than their *readers*, no doubt. But some degree of health is postulated in the reader of this book. Its pages are not intended to supply the figurative equivalent of Kruschen Salts or an enema. Nor is it the intention of its author to open a clinic or a nursing-home, or an institute for the half-witted, nor yet a beauty-parlour. Understanding on that point with the reader at the start will be an advantage." Not that he expects many healthy readers. He goes on: "A book of this description is not written for an audience already there, prepared to receive it, and whose minds it will fit like a glove. There must be a good deal of stretching of the receptable, it is to be expected." And he adds that his book aims "at no audience already there, with whom I am acquainted," since Nietzsche's "good Europeans" or *esprits libres* are, as far as he is aware, non-existent.

The difficulty of reading Mr. Lewis's book is certainly considerable, and he is perhaps right in warning us beforehand. The reason for this is not the lack of a free-minded public. Many readers to-day will, for instance, find his enlightened and provocative discussion of homo-sexuality quite to their taste. The difficulty is rather that he has written a highly intelligent cross-word puzzle rather than a book—and that those who enjoy cross-word puzzles will probably find this one too intelligent for them, while those whose mental receptacles are capable of the necessary stretching will doubt whether the prize gained for solving the puzzle is worth the considerable length of time needed for finding the solution.

Mr. Lewis's book consists of thirteen parts, which comprise nearly a hundred short chapters. The sentences of which these chapters are composed are usually "semi-detached," the chapters are "detached," and the parts may be described as "standing in their own ground." There are few aspects of life on which Mr. Lewis does not touch directly or indirectly, and on almost all he has something witty and original to say. It is enlivening to be told that "most people's favourite spot in 'nature' is to be found in the body of another person, or in the mind of another person, not in the meadows, plains, woods and trees." On another page he tells us that a "necessitous mechanic" to-day is not "called a slave. He is called Mr. Everyman, and his rulers try and sell him a toothbrush or a bassinette. When he is compelled to kill other mechanics . . . with bombs and shells, he is described as a volunteer. That part of the earth on which he has had the misfortune to be born is called 'his country,' which is as though you called the Ritz *his* hotel."

The whole book is rather like Samuel Butler's "Note-books," and it is, perhaps, a pity that Mr. Lewis did not leave it at that. Taken in nugget form his writing is extremely stimulating. Every paragraph contains ideas which provoke contradiction or open vistas for debate. Like Butler, too, Mr. Lewis has serious and contemptuous things to say about his species. His general philosophy seems, however, to be much less original than his manner of stating it. It is, indeed, a restatement, in modern terms, of Aristotle's theory of the "natural slave." He uses Goethe's division of mankind into natural men and *mechanical* men, or puppets, and argues that the latter, who are the vast majority, "must have a ruling caste, if only to satisfy the profound instinct and wish of the great majority of people to be ruled." Most men only want "freedom" on rare occasions—they need, in fact, a kind of "saturnalia" in which periodically to work off the "primitive animal in them coming into its own for a moment." He hates "democracy" and all its offspring, and declares that a little investigation shows that most men have no genuine desire to "express their personality" because they have none to express. They are, in fact, puppets easily controlled by the scientific use of propaganda, and reduced, for the most part, to a fairly uniform type. On the whole, Mr. Lewis thinks, it is inevitable and, indeed, desirable that most of the population should turn into standardized

"Robots." He watches the growth of a "bread and circus" policy with complacency, since he believes that, in time, the intellectual man, who alone is valuable, may thus be saved from the vulgarization which now penetrates even the life of the free intelligence. There is nothing new in this. Mr. Lewis does not take any account of the periodic reaction which even scientific propaganda produces in the Robot. Moreover, while he welcomes cinemas, football matches, and Charles Garvice as the modern equivalent of circuses, he leaves alone the more difficult question of providing for a satisfying distribution of bread. But Mr. Lewis's cheap politics, his invective, his wit, and his intellectual snobbery are made interesting by the sincerity with which he pleads for the rights of the human intellect. He is moved by a genuine passion to free the mind of the thinker from bondage, and for this even the "superior person" may be forgiven much.

THE CREED OF A EUGENIST

The Need for Eugenic Reform. By Major LEONARD DARWIN. (Murray. 12s.)

THIS book, by the President of the Eugenics Education Society, will probably cause many adherents to the Eugenic faith to rub their eyes and wonder. A more honest and less persuasive book it would be difficult to find. There is no deception: all "t's" are duly crossed, and all "i's" decorated with a dot, or even a diæresis.

The problem of Eugenics is, of course, that of improving the quality of human life by selective breeding. The results obtained by stock-breeders and gardeners have, not unnaturally, provoked speculation among sociologists as to the possibilities of parallel results being obtainable by like methods applied to men and women by human governments. It is established that by the drastic selection and elimination of potential parents, through a series of generations, distinct, and in certain ways differentiated, varieties of many species of animals and plants can be produced. Most of our domestic animals and plants had thus their origin. And it is certain that if we wished to produce a nation of men with preponderantly dark hair or blue eyes, and if we could induce everyone for a large number of generations to leave his mating entirely to the discretion of an expert biological committee of the Cabinet, such a result could be brought about. Simple results of this kind, however, are very different from those aimed at by serious eugenicists. Their ideal is much more general. Not a blue-eyed race, but a "generally superior" race is the professed object of their endeavours. And here, at once, we are up against questions, physiological and psychological, which need to be answered before we even consider the many ethical and philosophical problems involved. Fatness in pigs and magnitude in strawberries are qualities or characteristics universally patent to the eye, and measurable by accepted standards. No such universality of opinion exists as to what makes up human excellence. The variety of judgment in this matter is equalled only by the variety of humanity, and most of us will be thankful that this is so. For monotony, even in healthy living and clear thinking—if such terms were unequivocally definable,—is not an ideal that appeals to all of us.

To Major Darwin, this initial problem presents no difficulty. According to him, relative human excellence may, for practical purposes, be measured by degree of success in the earning of a large income. "Pressure" should "for the most part be applied to those in receipt of the lowest rate of wages." With a view to segregation or sterilization, a list is proposed to be kept of all those who have received public assistance in the form of school meals, unemployment benefit, sickness benefit under the Health Insurance Act, &c., "and all parents on the list who have had two or more children should be warned that no more should be allowed to appear. . . . When the warning was found to have been neglected, another child having made its appearance, all members of the family should be segregated in some suitable institution. . . . To mitigate the severity of this procedure, all couples should be released from detention, either if it seemed probable that they could re-establish themselves in decent surroundings, without public assistance, or if the man consented to be sterilized. . . . The sterilization of the woman would be a more serious

affair. . . . The above suggestions cover all that could, at first, he advocated, even though it would leave wide fields still untouched." Later, presumably when this procedure had become popular, the regulations might be extended to include all those whose housing accommodation fell below a certain standard. Answering a supposed objection, as to the present impossibility for many people of obtaining decent houses, our author expresses the opinion that this difficulty is in most cases due to incapacity to pay an economic rent, and is therefore racially inexcusable. Utopia is, however, only likely to be fully realized when "the coal supplies of this country begin to be exhausted. The resulting economic pressure would show itself in an increase in the numbers of those in receipt of public assistance; and if State aid had, by then, been made a determining factor in checking parenthood, the population would thus be steadily and automatically reduced in accordance with the needs of the situation." The rule would thus act "in a most beneficial manner; for the lower the wage, the more often would public assistance be demanded"; and, consequently, the larger the number of poor people who would be compulsorily segregated or sterilized. So that is that! Practical politicians and Parliamentary candidates in search of a new popular cry may like to consider this proposal.

Anyway, it will be realized that this book has certain æsthetic qualities which some readers, at all events, will not fail to appreciate. Agreeable touches are frequent: "To give all citizens a chance of walking in pleasure-grounds, free of cost, will produce benefits which can be enjoyed as much by parents of large families as by bachelors, and will, therefore, have little, if any, tendency either to reduce the number or to postpone the date of the marriages of the citizens in question or to lessen the size of their families." There is also a not unpleasing account of how the physician, in the Eugenic State, should approach his young married patients, when pointing out to them that any children they might have would be socially undesirable. The lessened craving for alcohol observable at present is attributed to "the high death-rate among drunkards in past ages." Elsewhere the author pathetically asks: "Can our politicians be induced to consider who would make the most desirable ancestors for posterity?" Electors will be wise to press for the list of a candidate's selections before voting for him.

Humour aside, it is strange that so "well-born" a man as a son of Charles Darwin should be capable of solemnly writing so fundamentally unscientific and wooden-headed a book. There is a surprising lack of recognition, on the one hand, of the smallness of our existing knowledge of heredity and the interplay of heredity and environment, and, on the other hand, of the few relevant facts that have been established. The social smugness implicit throughout is appalling. One can but assume that the author's mental life has been spent between military offices and an assured and comfortable home. Such conditions are wont to breed a degree of complacency almost incredible to anyone whose life has been spent in the world of men and of the doings of men. I happen, by the circumstances of my life, to know intimately many of those financially unsuccessful inhabitants of our poorer quarters despised by our author, and little less intimately many thousands of such. I, at any rate, have failed to observe any fundamental or inherent mental or physical inferiority—to say nothing of the spiritual or ethical—among these men, women, and children, as compared with the better-housed and better "educated" products of Brixton and Mayfair. One has but to look round within the circle of one's acquaintance, or look up the biological and ancestral history of men notorious for success or failure, to realize how futile, in our present state of knowledge, would have been any prognosis, based on the crude notions of heredity implicit in this "authoritative" volume.

There is a very small field lying within the estate of certifiable insanity in which practical Eugenics may rightly play a part in the immediate future; but books like this inevitably create such a prejudice, even in the minds of the normally judicious, that needed measures are likely to be postponed rather than hastened thereby.

It is to be hoped that the urgent question of the voluntary limitation of population will not be obscured through the obtuse and narrow-visioned mentality of many apostles of Eugenics; for the two matters are really quite separate and unrelated.

HARRY ROBERTS.

FICTION

Lying Prophets. By EDEN PHILLPOTTS. (Thornton Butterworth. 2s. 6d.)

Notre Cœur. By GUY DE MAUPASSANT. Newly Translated. (Werner Laurie. 7s. 6d.)

Samuel Drummond. By THOMAS BOYD. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

Dark Laughter. By SHERWOOD ANDERSON. (Jarrolds. 7s. 6d.)

Ann Lee's, and Other Stories. By ELIZABETH BOWEN. (Sidgwick & Jackson. 7s. 6d.)

THE reissue of two books written about thirty years ago provokes some comment on the development of the novel; yet after "Lying Prophets" and "Notre Cœur" have been read alongside three new books there is astonishingly little change to report, and Mr. Sherwood Anderson's is the only book that can easily be labelled "modern."

Mr. Phillpotts's book, for instance, does not really date, since it belongs to an unreal time that is always with us, and it would still make a good bad film story. For a happy ending could be contrived, and the other ingredients are all there: a stern, patriarchal fisherman in oilskins; his simple, fair-haired daughter in a sunbonnet; and (most important) a betrayer. He is an artist who calls children "the flower-buds in nature's lap," but who is, for all that, a callous villain who sacrifices Joan to his pleasure in the names of Art and Nature. Against his paganism is arrayed the ruthless puritanism of Joan's father, self-anointed prophet of the Lord; while the *via media* indicated between the narrow way and the road to destruction runs along the gentle safety of the Church of England. Mr. Phillpotts has, of course, a genuine understanding of nature; but his careful descriptions of it are wasted as a background for a commonplace story, falsely idealized.

Guy de Maupassant's "Notre Cœur," on the other hand, deals with real men and women; and although it dates, it so gains the added, recreated life of a period piece. It is about a modern woman of 1890, who regards and cherishes herself as an object of *virtu*, and whose vain refinement has reduced her to a "sterile inability to love." Miss Laurie's exquisite translation may be recommended as a delightful version of a first-rate book.

"Samuel Drummond," by Mr. Thomas Boyd, recalls the old song's bald assertion that:—

"Old Macdonadee had a farm,
O-hi-o-hi-o,"

with its inventory of very fine turkey-cocks and other livestock to be found on it. It is a straightforward chronicle of the life and struggles of a Middle-Western farmer; but the human situations are shirked, and the organic natural movement which forms its bulk fails to produce much cumulative effect. Mr. Boyd writes well, however, and may yet do for the Middle-West what Knut Hamsun has so impressively achieved for Norway.

Mr. Sherwood Anderson's method is reminiscent, and he tells his story backwards. First, the man Bruce, musing verblessly to himself, recalls an evening spent uncomfortably with his wife a few months back, and how he then mused verblessly about the events of the preceding weeks. We learn gradually that he has fled from Chicago's impotence to New Orleans, niggers, and the Ohio, groping *en route* for his real self, and for the words that shall express it. Yet all he achieves are a little poem to James Joyce and the aphorism that "If life were not so complex, it would be more simple." Then click! we are switched off his line on to Aline's; and back we go, shunted along through her memories, inhibitions, and disappointments, and forward through them again, till the lines converge and the two trains of thought collide with a jolt. But the loose construction and lack of verbs are made a strength rather than a weakness, and this method certainly reproduces the inconsequent, repetitive flow of thought. Further, the thoughts' validity is proved by the conclusion, which outsiders must have thought absurd, but which we, with our superior knowledge, accept as the inevitable if unedifying climax.

Miss Bowen's delightful stories demand a reader with all his wits about him; for though she sets her scenes and defines her characters with a decision exceeding Katherine Mansfield's, yet the encounters are so elusive, the relations so subtle, and her handling of situations so light, that you can afford to miss no hint of her intention. And although

her structures are tangible enough, they are so brittle fine that clumsy reading would trample them to confusion. The stories suggest that Miss Bowen is still young; for, in spite of the maturity of her restraint and understanding, she has retained the memory of childish sensibilities unblurred, and feels the ebullience of youth, even while neatly exposing it for our delight.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Castles in the Air. By VIOLA TREE. (Hogarth Press. 18s.)

IN this delightful book Miss Viola Tree recalls for a moment the good old days before the World War, when Mr. Asquith was a power in the land and under the banner of the last Liberals we all marched on to Elysium. In those days it was very Heaven to be young. We may change the words of Talleyrand and say *Personne ne sait la douceur de vivre qui n'a pas vécu sous Edouard VII.* A revolution greater than that of Napoleon rolls between those days and ours. It is suitable that the two heroes of this book are two eminent Edwardians, Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree and Mr. Asquith himself, whose sympathetic correspondence with his high-spirited, overflowing young friend occupies a large proportion of Miss Tree's reminiscences.

Miss Tree's castle in the air was a belief that she was going to be a great operatic singer, a belief which few but Mr. Shaw had the heart to discourage, and his firm, kindly letter is almost the only suspicion that such a thing as a critical attitude could exist in the roseate light of fifteen years ago.

Miss Tree's other object, in which she was, fortunately, more successful, was to marry Mr. Alan Parsons, then a bright young man at Oxford, and we trace her life and voice-training in Italy through her correspondence with her fiancé. In a sense there is nothing "to" the book, save the way in which it closes in catastrophe with Miss Tree's voice failing completely just before her first real public appearance. After which she gave up the idea of singing and thus earning £100 a week and enabling her husband to live in cultured ease. But the atmosphere of the whole is charming. How the historians of the future will be able to sentimentalize over it! Sir Herbert Tree, Mr. and Mrs. Asquith, Lady Diana Manners, Lord Ribblesdale, Iris, and Felicity: we see the magic names simply dripping off their pens. Nor can it be possible to blame these as yet unborn historians. Miss Tree was evidently so happy herself that she made everybody happy round her. She was quite clearly a "conductor," and raised the vitality of all those with whom she came in contact. Even Strauss took the trouble to be as delightful as possible. Still, it would be a mistake to regard Miss Tree merely as overflowing. She is, on the contrary, a good writer with an occasional gift of tart epigram. "Beecham with his enthusiasm and his fortune still intact" is not only neatly put, but crystallizes one aspect of those wonderful years when a Renaissance in the arts seemed at hand.

Most readers, however, will naturally turn to Mr. Asquith's correspondence with the authoress. His letters are certainly magnificent material for a volume of reminiscences, and reflect equal credit on both parties. Obviously, one of Miss Tree's chief qualities was to provide relief to the jaded, and Mr. Asquith summed it up perfectly when he said that she did not cheapen Paradise. A slightly sentimental relationship between elderly gentlemen and young girls is for some reason or other usually considered ridiculous, though personally I always find this Doctor Johnson-Fanny Burney business most engaging, and the Asquith-Tree correspondence seems to me a model of its kind. If anything can restore the fortunes of the Liberal Party, their correspondence should be able to do so. Our instinct for civilization permeates the whole, and one understands the *cri de cœur* that breathes forth in the words "I am horrified to hear that Mr. Asquith may go on an expedition to Ulster on July 11th. It would kill our wedding if he weren't there."

But indubitably the best epigram in the book is that of Raymond Asquith on Miss Tree's friend Patrick Shaw Stewart, "All Shaws are charlatans and all Stewarts are pretenders; besides, his nose is as sharp as a pen."

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

POEMS AND VERSES

New Verse. By ROBERT BRIDGES. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 6s.)

An Anthology of Youth. (John Lane. 7s. 6d.)

The Bookman Treasury of Living Poets. (Hodder & Stoughton)

The Best Poems of 1925. Edited by THOMAS MOULT. (Cape. 6s.)

Ivory Palaces. By WILFRED ROWLAND CHILDE. (Kegan Paul 6s.)

Sword Songs. By DOROTHY MARGARET STUART. (Methuen. 5s.)

Marcellus, and Other Poems. By A. G. McL. PEARCE HIGGINS. (Blackwell. 4s. 6d.)

THE poets have been asked to declare a moratorium. There are moments when one wishes they would accede to this request. These anthologies, these slim volumes, these brief lyrical squeals, these butterflies, these clouds, bluebells, or nerves—what a weariness of the spirit! We yawn, we drown; life loses all that it ever held of sharpness, of excitement, of significance. Let us take some lines at random:—

"Love Summer sits at her wheel of June,
And spins her cloth of rose . . ."

or:

"High solemnities of answered prayer,"

or:

"The untasted chalice of all years,"

or:

"Thrill with sweet echoes of the trembling spheres"; these present themselves as we open book after book, haphazard, without even looking at the name of the author. Now, what does all that mean? What possible jerk of our consciousness can we get from such rigmarole?

"Oh, what avail
Thoughts pregnant with Eternity, the sights
Of Paradise disrobed to lead on high
A spirit chained to frailty and to tears?"

What, indeed?

The first requisite of a poet is that he shall have a voice of his own, instantly recognizable whenever he speaks with it; and that he shall use it in such a manner as to convince us that that which he expresses is drawn from a direct and laborious experience; not that the expression shall be laborious, but that the experience shall have been something which has taken place within himself, intimately though subtly related to all the surrounding landscape of his other experience, and which shall be something drawn out of himself, forged, and heavily stamped with his peculiar mark—without this he is not a poet but a word-monger; not a living person, but a lady's maid with a lot of bits of ribbon in a work-basket. Looking through these volumes, it is quite startling to hear how the real voice differs from the false; this is not the same as saying that all the real voices are of the same diapason; but the difference is one of degree, not of quality. Humbert Wolfe, Frank Kendon, J. R. Ackerley, Martin Armstrong, Louis Golding—I purposely omit the better-known names—all speak out when we reach their page. But an anthology is no fair test; it must be a very loud voice indeed, a regular shout, that can carry in so short a space. It is the whole poet that we want to know, the whole personality. Therefore, anthologies ought to be gathered only from the poets that we know already (in a form convenient for the pocket), so that we may fill in the outlines from our own previous knowledge; or they should be devoted to one special subject, so that in that respect, at least, they may be homogeneous, such as Mrs. Susan Miles's "Anthology of Youth," which is a very companionable production.

Dr. Bridges apologizes for the "distracting variety" of his booklet, but for a book which contains "Melancholy" and "Come si quando" surely no apology is needed. Here is a voice, sonorous and noble; though I should prefer to disregard the more sportive pages: it offends me to see Dr. Bridges roguish. But in his old manner this book contains passages as fine as any he has done, and, not to labour the point of the poet's voice, I shall quote in illustration the twelve opening lines of "Come si quando," which, as it appears to me, may be set fearlessly against any twelve lines from the great volume of Wordsworth:—

"How thickly the far fields of heaven are strewn with stars!
 Tho' the open eye of day shendeth them with its glare
 Yet, if no cloudy wind curtain them nor low mist
 Of earth blindfold us, soon as Night in grey mantle
 Wrappeth all else, they appear in their optimacy
 From under the ocean or behind the high mountains
 Climbing in spacious ranks upon the stark-black void;
 Ev'n so in our mind's night burn far beacons of Thought
 And the infinite architecture of our darkness,
 The dim essence and being of our mortalities,
 Is speckled with fair fire-flecks of eternity
 Whose measure we know not nor the wealth of their rays."

V. SACKVILLE-WEST.

LEGAL ESSAYS

Cambridge Legal Essays. By VARIOUS CONTRIBUTORS.
 Edited by Dr. WINFIELD and Dr. MCNAIR. Written in
 honour of and presented to Dr. BOND, Professor Buckland,
 and Professor Kenny. (Cambridge: Deffer.)

THIS is a series of essays written in honour of three distinguished jurists who, during the last twenty years, have done so much for the Law School in the University of Cambridge. Its very excellences, its form, and its variety, as well as its purpose, make it a difficult book to review.

Each of the essays is accomplished without being heavy. It is particularly admirable that anyone should have the hardihood to attempt, as Mr. Glover Alexander does, to write anything intelligible in nineteen pages on the new Law of Property Acts. He succeeds in bringing out some of the salient points of principle, while omitting all reference to practical details. This, indeed, is the true difference between the learning of the Universities and the learning acquired in the practice of a profession. It is as teachers of the fundamental principles of the law that the triumvirate have been so conspicuously successful.

Professor Beale's article, on the other hand, deals with an intensely practical question, and one which needs discussing, viz., the position which arises where the Courts of one country are called upon to exercise jurisdiction over the person or estate of a foreign national. One of the most important points in connection with O.XI., and one which requires further consideration, is the situation which arises when a conditional appearance is entered. At present the machinery which exists for testing whether or not the action should proceed is open to very considerable criticism.

Perhaps one of the most charming essays in this collection is Dr. Carr's trifle on the citation of statutes. Here we have a subject such as Spelman might have been delighted to toy with (if indeed Spelman could toy with anything) treated with the lightest of touch and a superabundant knowledge. It rather reminds one of a jolly book called "City Latin," which was written in the early eighteenth century to prove that every letter, numeral, and dot in a certain Latin inscription in the City of London was wrong.

From Dr. Carr's struggles with the regnal year we pass on our magic carpet to a dissertation on the Charitable Foundations of Byzantium, and come up to breathe once more in company with Mr. Goodhart and the Liability for the Consequences of a Negligent Act. Now I entirely decline to discuss what is negligence, but Mr. Goodhart evidently feels a call to inquire closely into this matter and does it so adequately that the next time I am defending an obviously negligent person I shall reread his essay in the hope of collecting straws.

The remaining articles cover equally wide ground. For those who have occasion to consider the operation of Roman-Dutch Law, Dr. Oliver's essay on Roman Law in Modern Cases in English Courts will recall many neat points. It comes as a shock to a modern English lawyer to pick up a law report of this century and to find such subjects as the unduteous will still being discussed as a living matter. I remember once, on a question before P. O. Lawrence J., endeavouring to quote Homer in support of a proposition concerning *donationes mortis causa*, when the learned Judge suggested that if we commenced our researches a thousand years later it might shorten the case. Dr. Oliver, however, while dealing with the modern law, recalls the ancient reason and shows that in some cases those reasons are more cogent than the empirical rules occasionally applied to-day.

Altogether a graceful and interesting volume.

GILBERT STONE.

BRET HARTE

The Letters of Bret Harte. Assembled and Edited by
 GEOFFREY BRET HARTE. (Hodder & Stoughton. 21s.)

IT is questionable whether the domestic correspondence of great men can be of compelling interest. If we are pleased by the discovery that genius may growl over the cold joint on Monday, wear wool in winter, or behave itself ridiculously on all-fours in the nursery, it is because we are satisfied mildly in shocking our own romantic preconceptions and in taking a mean revenge on those whom we absolve by conspiracy from our own necessities. The majority of these collected letters were written by Bret Harte to his wife in America during his consular years in the small German town of Crefeld, and in Glasgow. Unfortunately, they are almost entirely dutiful. Reading between the domestic lines, one gathers that Bret Harte and his wife, with complete regard for their children, had come to a sensible agreement of some sort. Years after, when Mrs. Harte came to England, she went to live with her married son. Every month, in forwarding her allowance, Harte wrote in a faithful and affectionate manner that shows a fine sense of duty, but betrays no mental confidence. Since much of his letters is concerned with his declining health, his neuralgia and lumbago, it is evident that his wife was sympathetic in matters outside imagination. The result is that the glimpses of life in Germany and in England, of famous or titled acquaintances, are very incidental, and the following reference to Froude is typical in its scribbled vagueness: "Froude—dear old noble fellow—is splendid. He is great, honest, democratic in the best sense of the word, scorning all sycophancy, &c. . . ." In writing to the Duchess of St. Albans he was a little more explicit, and his criticism of Henry James, if obvious, has a passing interest:—

"You ask me to tell you about Mr. James. I think I met him in Boston some years ago, when I first came from California, but I dare say I would not be able to recognize him now. Of his work I have only read 'Daisy Miller.' It struck me as being quite fresh and entertaining. My impression of the man, however, is that he is an American who has lived long enough abroad to be critical of his countrymen and countrywomen, and to be nervous, in a nice ladylike way, at the spectacle of their unconventionality. . . .

"In the spectacle of a New York husband working to keep up the Newport court of his queenly wife, and loyally accepting his own separate existence, Mr. James sees only something odd. He does not see the pathos of this figure, nor how perfectly characteristic it is of our woman-worshipping race, no more than the Englishman did. It vexes me to see this misunderstood. I love my country (as you pretty well know) and I revere its women-reverencing men. I find no such people anywhere else."

A reference to Hardy, in a letter (as we need hardly say) to his wife, yields nothing: "I saw Hardy—the novelist—at the club the other night. A singularly unpretending-looking man, and indeed resembling anything but an author in manner and speech."

Bret Harte always remained an exile in emotion. He disliked Germany, its beer and music. He thought Tannhäuser a "diabolically ludicrous and stupidly monotonous performance." "I shall say nothing about the orchestral harmonies, for there wasn't anything going on of that kind unless you call something that seemed like a boiler factory at work in the next street, and the wind whistling through the rigging of a Channel steamer." He approached Glasgow with some trepidation, "I hope I may be disappointed in the Scotch people. All I hear of them is dreadful." Being a humourist, Bret Harte was more or less melancholy in his private existence, and the following is the only "good story" in these letters, which range over twenty years:—

"A gentleman going to church one Sunday found himself too early for the service and would pass the time away by walking in an adjacent park. But the park-keeper opposed him and informed him he must not desecrate the 'Sawbath' by walking in the park. In vain the gentleman pleaded that he was only waiting to go to church. The park-keeper was unflinching. Then the gentleman, a little indignantly, informed the park-keeper that Our Lord not only walked in the fields with his disciples on the Sabbath day, but plucked some ears of corn and ate them. 'Aye,' said the park-keeper. 'And I'm na thinkin' the better o' him for that.' This is the most perfect exposition of Scotch theology I ever heard."

The general impression to be gathered from these letters, allowing for the fact that they were written mostly to his wife, is that of a man who had really outlived the fortuitous imagination of his youth and was merely compelled to prolong into comparative age a talent spent too quickly. It is scarcely realized that the formative period of his life lasted only one year: a few months among the frantic red-shirted and top-booted men who scratched the wild soil beneath the snow-capped mountains of the Sierra Nevada for sudden fortune during the gold rush of the 'fifties, a few months as a guard of the gold carried from the mining camps to San Francisco gave the world "The Luck of Roaring Camp." The last years of Bret Harte were tragic, for he had outlived his vogue: their bravery and endurance give moral worth to these letters.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

The Catalogue of the George Eumorfopoulos Collection of Chinese, Korean, and Persian Pottery and Porcelain. Vol. II.—From T'ang to Ming. By R. L. HOBSON. (Benn. £12 12s.)

The Sung dynasty, which is the period mainly covered by this volume, lasted for more than three hundred years (from 960 to 1279 A.D.), and has been called the Augustan Age of Chinese culture. It was, at any rate, an age of prolonged peace, prosperity, and that widespread patronage of the arts for which we ourselves often yearn. For that reason it is a period which we may study with profit, if only to correct our own ideals. We find the arts, as reflected in this admirably representative art of pottery, taking on certain characteristics which, from a general standpoint, whether of philosophy or of history, we hesitate to acclaim wholeheartedly. Here is "beauty," refinement, and wonderful technical efficiency; and, if we were asked to define the character of Sung pottery in two words we should describe it as a subtle bravura, whether of decoration or of line. This is true equally of the Ju types, where the emphasis is perhaps to be put on the subtlety, as of the more masculine Northern Celadons, where the emphasis is to be put on the bravura. The rest, such as the chün and temmoku wares, if they are not to be so summarily characterized, may be said to depend for their attraction on certain physical or chemical transmutations of the glaze, and their appreciation is very much a matter for a sympathetic temperament, calling into play the same sort of emotion with which we pick the rosier apple. But if we seem in any way to deprecate these Sung wares (and the deprecation is, in any case, only apparent in terms of the greater achievements of the earlier dynasties), we do not extend the sentiment to the volume devoted to them. This is wholly admirable, and maintains the high distinction of scholarship and book production which we noted at more length on the appearance of the first volume.

The Stock Exchange Official Intelligence for 1926. (Spottiswoode, 60s.)

This splendid work of reference, produced under the sanction of the Committee of the Stock Exchange, has grown so fat that subscribers can now have it, if they like, in three volumes (for 12s. 6d. extra). The 450 new companies added this year would have brought it beyond 2,000 quarto pages, which must be nearly the maximum which can be contained within two covers, if the Supplementary Index of defunct companies, &c., had not been pushed out. This Index can now be obtained separately for 2s. 6d. Room has been found, however, for the new Trustee Act as well as the usual statistical matter. Serious investors will spend their money well to have this book at hand, even if they cannot afford to renew it more often than every three or four years.

Philip's Road Atlas-Guide to Great Britain. (Philip. 3s. 6d.)

Daily Mail 1926 Road Map of London and Ten Miles Round. (Associated Newspapers. 3s.)

These are both extremely useful publications, particularly for motorists. The Road Atlas-Guide is extraordinarily handy and clear. It shows the main motoring roads, and the three other classes of motoring roads in the classification of the Ministry of Transport, as well as a good deal of other information. The maps are admirable. At the end is a gazetteer of places of interest. The scale of the maps is 10 miles to 1 inch. The Daily Mail Road Map shows the new arterial roads and the main roads out of London, and is based on the Ordnance Survey. The scale is 1 mile to 1 inch. It is extremely clear and easy to use.

NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

COLUMBIA RECORDS

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: "Chanson Hindou"; and TOSELLI: Second Serenade. Played by Jean Lensen and his Orchestra. (10-in. record. 3919. 3s.)

This is not a very successful record. The tendency to shrillness and wiriness is pronounced. Neither of the two pieces is very interesting.

POPPER: "Vito"; and FORINO: "Tarantella." 'Cello solos by Antoni Sala. (10-in. record. 3922. 3s.)

It is a pity that Antoni Sala does not play rather more interesting music. He is an extremely good 'cellist. Both the pieces which he plays on this record are pleasant, but nothing more.

DON COSSACKS CHOIR: Russian Folk Songs, "Monotonously Rings the Little Bell" and "Song of the Volga Boatmen." (12-in. record. 4s. 6d. 9085.)

This is an admirable record in every way. Both songs are just what is wanted for a choir, the first being strangely moving.

SCHUBERT: "Erl King"; and CHORLEY AND HATTON: "The Enchantress." Sung by Muriel Brunskill, contralto. (12-in. record. 9088. 4s. 6d.)

The "Erlkönig" is a mighty test for any singer, and you have to be an Elena Gerhardt to come through it successfully. Put the Gerhardt record on and then compare the last notes as sung by her with those of Muriel Brunskill, and the difference is immense. Miss Brunskill's voice has, in fact, not come through quite as it should on this record. "The Enchantress" is rather a pretentious and foolish song.

"Ye Banks and Braes" and "Annie Laurie," sung by Rex Palmer, with piano. (10-in. record. 3924. 3s.)

"The Rose of Tralee" and "Kitty of Coleraine," sung by Seamus O'Doherty, with orchestra. (10-in. record. 3923. 3s.)

These pleasant old Scotch and Irish songs are sung as they should be by Mr. Palmer, a bass, and Mr. O'Doherty, a tenor. They ought to be very popular.

BELTONA RECORDS

This month the Beltona has a 12-in. record (7003, 4s. 6d.) of May Huxley, soprano, who sings: "Lo! here the gentle lark" (Bishop), with piano and flute obbligato, and "Il Bacio" (Arditi), with piano accompaniment. The recording is good and the singing fair. A good record is two pieces of Chopin: Waltz in G flat, Op. 70, No. 1, and the Nocturne in E flat, played on the piano by Ethel Attwood (6044, 3s.). Another 3s. record is "The Mighty Deep" and "Bells of the Sea," sung, with orchestral accompaniment, by Harry Brindle, who has a powerful bass voice (6043). The 2s. 6d. records include the popular "Valencia" and "Love Bound," played by the Sunny South Dance Orchestra and the Southern States Dance Band respectively (956); Mendelssohn's "Fingal's Cave," played by the Sutherland Orchestra (970); "Roll on, thou deep and dark, blue ocean," and "Mélisande in the Wood," sung by Manuel Hemingway, bass (961); "Until" and "Danny Boy," cornet solos, played by Lieut. Harry Pell (937).

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